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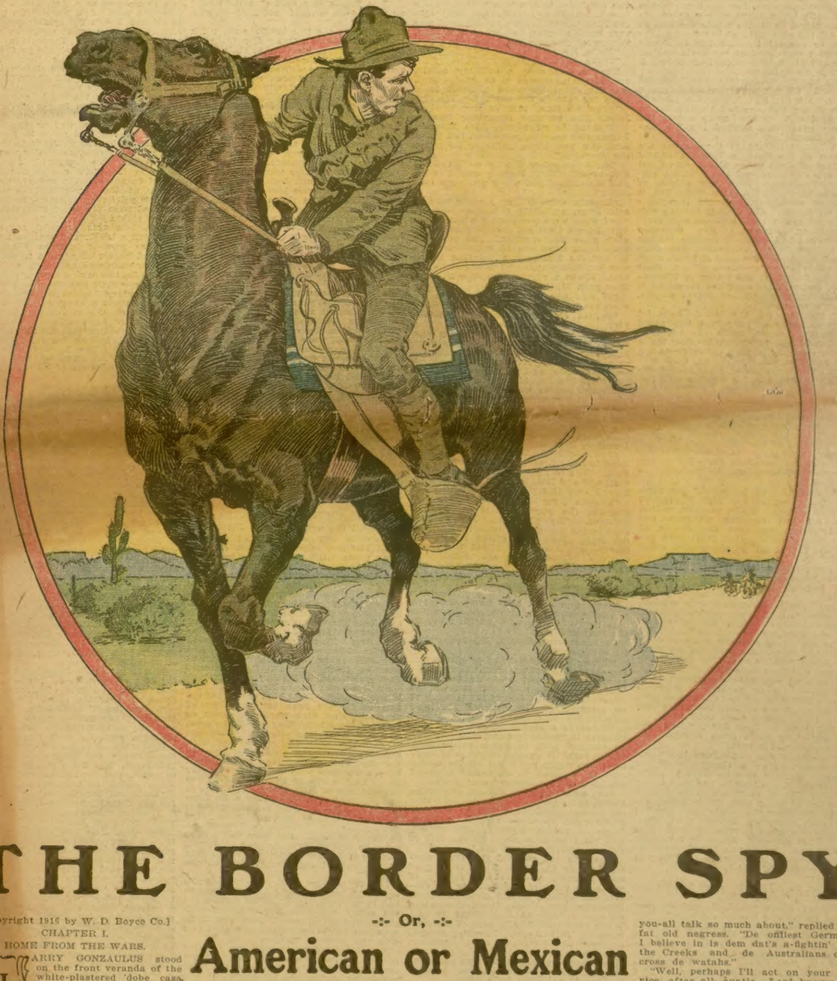

THE BORDER SPY

-:- Or, -:-

American or Mexican

By Augustin W. Breeden

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CHAPTER I.

HOME FROM THE WARS.

HARRY GONZAULUS stood on the front veranda of the white-plastered 'dobe casa of the old Las Mesas rancho, and gazed across the shimmering grama grass flats to where a beautiful modern bungalow nestled among the willows, which gave Willowcroft its name. He gazed for a moment, and then turned about sighing.

"Lan' sakes, Marse Harry, the way you goes on an' stares an' stares over toward Willercrof, I git plum skeered o' you sometimes. I believe effen you don't go an' repose to Miss Julie an' git recepted you's gwine plum crazy. Go an' repose to her, Marse Harry. She'll hab you, man a-livin', ez fine a lookin' man ez you is. Don't you know she'll hab you an' glad o' the chance?"

"I wish I were as sure of it as you seem to be, Aunt Mandy; but I'm not at all sure of it; and I'm not at all sure that I have a right to ask her. I've only got a certain lease on life, you know. I'd hate to play dog in the manger. It wouldn't be very pleasant for her to find herself a consumptive's widow after a year or two of married life."

"Lan' sakes, Marse Harry, how you carry on! You're ez strong ez a buck!"

"Everybody is in this climate, Aunt Mandy, unless they're clean gone when they get here, but that don't prove that some of us haven't the germ in our blood."

"I don't believe in dem Germans what you-all talk so much about," replied the fat old negress. "De onliest Germans I believe in is dem dat's a-fightin' wid the Creeks and de Australians over cross de watahs."

"Well, perhaps I'll act on your advice, after all, auntie. Lord knows I'm tempted to!"

And Harry Gonzaulus did at least start to act on the old negro housekeeper's advice. Within half an hour after the conversation with her he had dispatched Pedro, the house boy, with a note to Julia Meriton, asking if she wouldn't take a horseback ride with him across the desert that afternoon. Julia was "pleased to go," and at 3 o'clock Harry's black mount, Hero, was tied to a mesquite post at the entrance of the beautiful grounds of Willowcroft. As he strode past the artificial lake full of floating water lilies, and fringed with cress and flanked on every side by stately weeping willows, and gazed down upon the low gardens on four sides of the lake and irrigated from it, he thought to himself that there was not a more beautiful or romantic spot in all the world than this. It was early June, and yet the gardens were already in a riot of greenery and bloom.

"So beautiful and so peaceful!" he mused. "And yet this Eden is so near the Mexican border that it is liable to be raided at any time now."

His thoughts were interrupted as Julia appeared in her doorway. Harry thought he had never seen her look more beautiful. She wore a smart olive-green, semi-military riding costume, with green top boots, and on her head perched a chic little green toque with a chic little green aigret in it, the whole seeming to set off the rich gold of her hair rather than to conceal it. In her hand she carried a quirt, and at her heels stalked a beautiful mouse-colored greyhound, fleet as an antelope.

Her bay mare, Princess, was being led forward from the 'dobe stable by a Japanese house boy, Hisuta. A moment later Harry and she had shaken hands, mounted and ridden away across the grama grass flats toward the Big Hachita Mountains.

To left and right of them along the bottom of the Hachita Valley beautiful squares of deep green alfalfa stood out in the clear air and the brilliant afternoon sunshine. Near the corner of each square stood a gray 'dobe hut, a barn of some sort, and the invariable tall windmill. Above their heads along the road ran a high voltage wire from Greenacres, a town of five thousand souls, that had suddenly become famous as a town where irrigation was done on a large scale by means of bored wells and electric motor-driven pumps. Such a pump furnished the water at Willowcroft, and another such one furnished it for the broad acres of Las Mesas rancho, Harry's estate.

At the turn of the road Julia let Princess out, and away the two raced across the prairie, while the beautiful greyhound had to stretch his fleet limbs to keep up. At a high cattle fence the two noble horses brought up, their delicate nostrils distended, their eyes flashing, their whole bodies aquiver with the joy of life.

The girl looked out across the valley that lay below them.

"Could there be anything more beautiful than a field of oats at just that stage!" she exclaimed. "Look how silvery green and beautiful."

Harry was able to think of other things more beautiful, her rich golden hair for instance, but he forebore to mention it.

"It certainly is beautiful," he murmured, looking at her hair instead of the field of oats. "Julie, can you realize, with all this summer stillness and beauty about us, that the people of these two countries that meet here are about to march out to shoot each other down?"

"I can't realize that there is going to be war," answered the girl, "and I suppose I shall never realize it till it comes."

"They'll fight right over this ground, like as not. At least our boys will march across here to attack the Mexicans. And the Mexes may raid us here. We are in such easy striking distance from Chihuahua State. Ah, it makes my blood boil, when I think how they raided Columbus, and that so near here."

"I thought you were a pacifist."

"I am—I am by nature, at least. I hate to kill even a coyote that has been pulling down my calves; but think how vilely these Mexes have behaved."

"And your brother Juan, whom you are expecting home from Europe. He is no pacifist, I'm sure."

"He certainly is not. Juan is a trouble hunter. He's a champion of lost causes. Witness how he went to assist the Belgians, and how he has been lately fighting like a very demon in Servia. He'd not be home now, but he's disgusted at the way the Allies have carried out that campaign in the near East. And then there's a prospect of trouble here, don't you see? Hence he is coming home. But I asked you to ride with me this afternoon in order to talk to you about something else."

"Yes?"

"Julia, how long have we known one another?"

"About three years, I reckon—ever since Daddy and I came out here."

"Yes, I have known you ever since you and Doctor Meriton came out here. It was lonely here on the range before you came. You've made the desert blossom like the July rains. Julia, I think almost as much of your father as if I were actually his son, and I have always thought of you as a little sister, but lately I—lately——"

Somehow he could not bring himself to say what was on his mind. The girl stole a sly look at him. He was jerking mightily at the girth strap of his saddle, about to cut off old Hero's wind. Also out of the tail of her eyes she saw another rider approaching.

"Who's that coming?" She pointed with the handle of her riding whip across a square of uncleared mesquite.

The young man who rode toward them was tall, erect and rode beautifully. He was smartly dressed in the garb of a French cavalry officer, smooth-shaven except for a dainty black mustache, and his thin face, even at that distance, looked rather worn. Harry recognized his brother at a glance, and was struck by the fact that in the two years that Juan had been in Europe he had grown thin and had aged terribly, and had come to look like Harry himself—most remarkably like him.

The girl, too, noticed that the handsome and gallant rider looked like the double of Harry Gonzaulus, and knew at once who it was. Still, it was hard to believe this was Juan Gonzaulus. She had seen him the spring that he was at home for a month, before he scented trouble in Europe and hurried over. She remembered him as a person with a round, laughing, mischievous face; also the Juan Gonzaulus she remembered was very much shorter, fleshier, and so very, very much younger than this man.

"Hello, Harry!"

"Hello, Juan!"

The brother gave a military salute, and Harry answered it in kind. In a moment the three were together in a little triangle in the road.

"Miss Meriton, this is my brother, Juan. You perhaps remember him."

"Pleased to meet you, Miss Meriton. I remember meeting you about two years ago, tho you have, perhaps, forgotten the occasion."

"No, I remember it very well, Colonel Gonzaulus. Your brother and I were just discussing you when you rode into sight."

"Captain only, if you please, ma'am,' said Juan, gallantly touching his cap. "And what were you saying when I rode up? I hope I am not greatly interfering with your conversation. I'm sorry to have burst upon you so unceremoniously, but old Mandy told me that Harry was out this way, and I just had to see him. We're a regular David and Jonathan pair, Miss Meriton."

"It was of no importance, what we were saying. Was it, Miss Julia?"

"No, of no importance," replied the girl.

Then she remembered that Harry was about to say something seemingly very important, and she felt herself a little piqued at Harry for saying it was of no importance, and at Juan for riding up just when he did. She stole a look at Harry, but he was gazing far away across the green squares of alfalfa toward the Mexican border.

"After all," thought the self-sacrificing Harry, "what right have I to play the dog in the manger? In another year I may be in a 'lunger's' grave."

Harry looked his brother over from head to toe. "Juan, you've changed," he said. "You've aged six years instead of two; and you look like me, more like me than I ever thought you'd look."

"Thanks for both compliments," drawled the younger brother, with a grimace. "By the way, I'm getting used to the second one—met a man over the mesa there who called me Mister Harry, and asked me about the crops and the irrigation and all. I told him the alfalfa was coming pretty good, but that we were having some pump trouble. I knew I could venture pump trouble on a guess."

Harry and Julia both laughed at the accuracy of Juan's guess. Pump trouble is a part of the program with those in the irrigated belt.

Juan alighted from a big rangy dun he was riding.

"Whoa, Diablo!" said he to his mount. He came forward and put his arms affectionately about old Hero's neck. "Nice old Hero, nice old fellow!" he crooned. And the beautiful black, as if he remembered him, nuzzled his head against him and nickered soft and low.

"He made a bigger horse than I ever thought he would," commented Juan, as he stepped back to get a better look. "Look here, Harry, you've got your flank girth too tight; you'll cut off his wind." And he stepped forward and loosened the girth for his embarrassed brother.

"But which way are you-all going?" he asked, as he leaped back to his own saddle like a Cossack, without so much as putting his hand on saddle or horse. "Ride on whichever way you've started, and I'll ride with you. I'm as full of talk as a Zeppelin is of gas."

The girl led off and the three cantered away together. Thus talking of many things, of wars and rumors of wars, the three rode out across the desert, and making a wide circuit of some low-lying hills, finally found themselves at sunset back at Las Mesas rancho. When they reached the gate of the casa grounds, Bill Brant, Harry's general overseer and irrigation man, came out and asked him to come and give directions about some work he was planning, and Harry asked his gallant younger brother to see Miss Julia home.

"Your father has certainly made this ranch a beauty spot since he bought it," said Juan, as he, too, admired the artificial lake and the lovely gardens that flanked it on four sides. "Does the doctor practice much, or does he spend most of his time looking after the ranch?"

"Practices free amongst the Mexicans mostly," replied the girl, "and looks after a few impecunious 'lungers' that have come out here and got stranded. Father has a mighty big heart in him, and I'm glad he has."

"By the way," interrupted Juan, "who planned the beautiful bungalow?"

"My father—planned it and built it,"

"Then he is an architect as well as a doctor?"

"Yes; Daddy is a sort of artist along all lines—all except military—he's a great pacifist."

That night the two brothers sat till a late hour talking, talking of a thousand things. After they retired to their room, which they had shared in common since childhood, they continued to talk till quartering time between midnight and morning. As Juan finally dozed off to sleep, Harry kept thinking of their happy boyhood together, and he could not sleep for a great sadness within him. They could never again be to each other what they once had been.

There were other things, then, besides death, thought Harry, that separated people. Life separated them, and growth. This terrible war in Europe, so much of which Juan had witnessed and lived thru, had made him forever a different person from the happy care-free boy he had once been. He was now, in everything but years, a much older man than Harry. The elder brother kept thinking of the words of his dying mother: "Harry, always look after Juan. He is so reckless, so daring. Look after him, Harry. He is very noble at heart, and will some day make one of God's good men."

As Harry thought of these words, he saw Juan again, a growing boy, a beautiful adolescent youth. He had a sudden desire to look again upon his brother's face. He struck a match and looked. Juan, worn out by long days of travel and loss of sleep, did not stir. His face was now in complete repose, and the mask of age and horrors seen had fallen away; and Harry saw all the softness of dewy youth. He saw also in the face the likeness of his dead mother and something of the saintly look that was always upon her features.

"I'll do what I can for him, mother," he said aloud, as to a living person, and the match flickered and went out.

On the southern horizon, the heat lighting, playing in the desert, made him think of those other fires—of blazing batteries—that were liable to light the desert now at any time.

CHAPTER II.

"TRAITOR?"

DURING the next ten days Juan Gonzaulus saw a very great deal of Julia Meriton. One may talk of cozy little glens with vines and flowers as Cupid's favorite lurking place; but there is something about the wild, free cow-country that attracts him, too. When the alfalfa begins to grow purple, and the oats to turn golden in the sun, and the water flashes in the irrigation canals, and the shimmering mirages hang over low, far-off flats and valleys, a man, riding along with a girl across God's wide reaches of landscape, feels impulses and thinks thoughts bigger and grander, and likewise freer, than the thoughts and feelings of men in the city or the town.

And Juan met Doctor Meriton and liked him immensely—liked him, except for the fact that when Juan talked wildly of revolutions all over Europe, as soon as this present Kings' War should be over, he felt that the doctor sometimes studied him with the critical eye of a superior. Juan was always for the under dog, and beyond that international boundaries had very little meaning for him. At the age of 19 he had followed the fortunes of Madero, and had been in one pitched battle not twenty miles from his own ranch. Later he had assisted Fletcher Mayo, an American-born Mexican, who raised a rebellion against the cutthroat, Huerta. And later, as we have seen, he fought for Belgium and Servia. Now he often talked wildly of the "rights of the peons" and the "rights of the Yaquis."

Doctor Meriton believed the boy's head had been turned by the horrors he had been in Europe, and that he saw red too easily where a strong power was pitted against a weak one; and Juan was just wise enough to know that this was the doctor's opinion.

But Julia evidently held no adverse opinion of him, and so he loved to get away with her for interminable rides across the mesas. As for Harry, he was very busy with the irrigation and the cattle and cutting the alfalfa, and so he left Juan and Julia very much together. Ever since he was 10 years old and his father had died and left the ranch—then only a cattle ranch—to his young widow and two boys, Harry had taken the leadership, and had become virtually the manager of the ranch, paying the impractical Juan a yearly allowance from the big yearly earnings of the place. So the little bright bay mare, Princess, and the big rangy dun, Diablo, became as good running mates as the little mare and Hero had formerly been. And the fleet-limbed greyhound, Pancho, soon learned to look forward to the coming of his mistress' new escort as eagerly as he had looked for the old; for a run is a run to a horse or a dog, and a man is merely a man. And the lizards, panting in the sun beside the prickly pears—the lizards, who are great observers of humanity—smiled to themselves lizard fashion to see the cavalcade go flying by.

Was Harry Gonzaulus then entirely blind? Well, he was certainly blinder in this matter than old Aunt Mandy, or Bill Brant, or even Doctor Meriton's Japanese cook; for they all saw plainly what was going on in the girl's heart, while he apparently did not. Harry guessed it, but he was no opportunist, he told himself; and again he kept telling himself he had no right to play the dog in the manger, especially where his own brother was concerned. Juan liked to be in the girl's company, and why should he not be? He was practically a visitor at the ranch, and deserved a visitor's privileges. Besides, as the hero returned from the wars, everything was his by rights.

Then into this peaceful scene suddenly fell a bomb. The continual stream of notes passing between Washington City and Mexico City began to grow less and less courteous and more and more frank. Like two cowboys, who, with hands poised near their gun sheaths, make uncomplimentary remarks about each other, so stood a President and a near-President of the two sister republics. One adjusted his eyeglasses and looked firm; the other twirled his Spanish mustachios and looked fierce. And suddenly, without the least warning, the terrible situation came home to the little peaceful ranchers of Willowcroft and Las Mesas.

Doctor Meriton and Julia were taking dinner with Harry and Juan. Both brothers had studiously avoided the topic of the oncoming war, Harry fearing what attitude his radical fire-eating brother might take, and Juan avoiding the subject for a reason entirely his own, and not to be shared with a sou It was the irascible and irresponsible Bill Brant that brought it all on.

"I tell you," he shouted, in response to some innocent remark about the beauty of the weather, "I tell you the men that blight this fair landscape with the scourge of war will burn in hell for their crime."

"And who will be to blame if a war is brought on?" asked Juan sweetly.

"It is a glorious day! Such beautiful sunshine after last night's shower!" said Julia, rather overly loud; but Brant was not to be downed by remarks about the weather.

"Who, but that fiend incarnate, Pancho Villa!" shouted Brant.

"Granted he is a fiend incarnate, are there not others?" questioned Juan.

"Yes!" roared Doctor Meriton, in quick reply. "There are General Carranza, and Trevino, and Obregon, and a score of such fiends."

The doctor suddenly brought down his fist in a china plate of little cakes, and sent cakes and bits of broken china flying all over the room.

"There, there!" cried Julia. "Your old argument has proved nothing and has cost the ancient Spanish house of Gonzaulus a perfectly good heirloom."

Harry leaped to his feet. "We may be Gonzauluses, and Spanish in name," he thundered, "but I for one am American in spirit, and by the Lord God, if this thing comes to a showdown, I'll——"

"Look out for the china! Look out for the china!" shouted Julia.

Everybody laughed, and the situation was saved temporarily, at least.

But that afternoon the two brothers took a long ride together across the mesas, and had a long talk over the terrible situation.

"Juan," said Harry, almost tenderly, "we're not going to quarrel about this matter, are we? From what you said to Brant today I gather that you have a twisted, distorted view of this affair; and I can understand that, too. I guess if I'd been in Europe the last two years and seen all you have seen of the crimes of great powers, and kings and potentates and centralized authority, I'd perhaps feel as you do. But a crime's a crime, and these villains across the border are dangerous criminals."

"Perhaps so," replied Juan, nonchalantly. "But then there are great criminals and little criminals the world over, and we ought to have patience. Harry, we ought to have patience."

"It has ceased to be a virtue," snapped the elder brother.

"It is always a virtue," said he who had outlived his elders. "Behold me, I even refuse to quarrel with you about this matter."

"But what do you intend to do, Juan, in case of war?"

"To go to General Trevino and offer

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my services. That is my intention."

"My God!"

"What's the matter?"

"I never thought a Gonzaulus or a Gordon would ever prove a traitor to his country, and you must remember, Juan, you are a Gordon just as much as if you bore the name!"

"Listen, while I tell you a secret." Juan threw one leg about the pommel of his Mexican saddle and nonchalantly rolled a cigarette. "Listen, I am in love with a beautiful Spanish girl whom I knew in Sonora and afterward in Paris, a Senorita Ysabel de Sao Paulo. I aim to make her my wife, and I have already adopted her country for my own. Have I not always been a friend of downtrodden peoples? For Carranza, perhaps, I care nothing. Villa I regard as a criminal. But the Mexican people —I shall fight for them if necessary."

"Juan!"

"What?"

"You surely cannot mean that."

"I do."

"Then, good-by! I will be no brother to a traitor." Harry's voice was as if a soul had spoken out of hell asking a little mercy. "But wait! Have you considered this thing thoroly?'

"Thoroly."

"Then good-by forever."

That same night Juan rode over to tell Julia good-by. They talked of many things, like the Walrus and the Carpenter, always avoiding the subject that was uppermost in both their minds. It may as well be confessed that Juan was now deeply in love with this rare girl; so it became just that much harder for him to tell her of his intentions. The girl finally broached the subject.

"Please don't think I'm meddling," said she, "but I have a great interest in you. Am I to understand from the way you talked at dinner today that your sympathies are all with the Mexicans?"

"My sympathies are always with the under dog."

"But if the under dog is suffering from hydrophobia, aren't you willing to shoot him, then, for the safety of the community?"

"Perhaps; but listen! What good is it going to do us to discuss this thing? I can't change your point of view, and I doubt if you can change mine."

Like many quiet people the girl was spirited enough when aroused, and suddenly she was very much aroused.

"You will at least admit, Mr. Gonzaulus, that there are some arguments on our side of this question. It is hardly probable that hundreds of thousands of people all over the United States have suddenly lost all sense of justice and right."

"But that's exactly what many of our citizens have done—lost all sense of right and justice."

The girl answered in kind. Juan felt like a man about to fall over a cliff. He wanted so much to tell her that he saw this thing exactly as she did; but too much depended on his playing his part and keeping his secret. Perhaps a thousand, perhaps five thousand American lives depended on his playing the part of a Mexican sympathizer; and who more fitted to play such a part than he? He had been a personal acquaintance of Pancho Villa, even while he hated and feared him. He had been a trusted soldier under Mayo, who in turn was trusted by that old Don, Carranza. He must play his part thru to the bitter end.

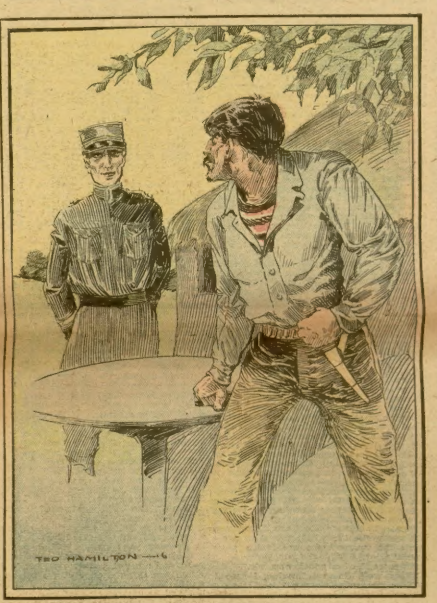
Yet when he had agreed to become a border spy, he never once dreamed that he was to lose his heart to such a fair charmer as this, and then lose her completely because of his work. Just now the lover in him bade him turn back, but his patriotic heart commanded him forward. His instructions were very definite upon this point. His first move was to make himself notorious by breaking with all his friends, and to get himself heralded thruout the whole country as a traitor to the United States. So he went on and argued with the girl, whom he was losing by the argument. And then, when the discussion waxed hottest, the imperturbable Japanese house boy, Hisuta, came noiselessly in and announced that Doctor Meriton wished to see his daughter in private for a minute.

Juan excused her and sat down and waited. The minute stretched out to five, then to ten, then to fifteen. Juan's mind was now fully made up to propose to her, at least to tell her of his affection for her, as soon as she returned, and to beg her to try to think kindly of him, and not to regard him as entirely a traitor. He could plead that he had one-eighth Spanish blood in his veins, which had come to him with the Gonzaulus name.

Presently the girl returned and stood posed in the doorway. Juan thought he had never seen her look more beautiful than at that moment. She wore a white filmy, flouncy something, and pinned in her crown of rich golden hair was a single spray of maiden hair fern. The light from the shaded electric light—a convenience furnished by the high-power wire from Greenacres—made a beautiful iridescent halo about her head.

"Mr. Gonzaulus," she said, "I am very sorry, but I'm going to have to tell you good night now."

"But Miss Meriton—Julia! Please! Just a moment!"



Carabeo stared at him fiercely.

"I'm sorry," said the girl, in a thrilling voice, "but I can't talk to you tonight. Hisuta will show you out."

The next moment Juan was alone outside in the sultry darkness, cursing softly but vehemently to himself. "Sherman had it right," he muttered. "War certainly is hell. Now I must lose that wonderful girl when I had at least a fighting chance of winning her. She thinks me a traitor. I wonder she did not spit in my face. And poor Harry, he's clean heartbroken; he'll never hold up his head again for the shame of it all. Well, such is war!"

When Juan returned that night to Las Mesas rancho for a few necessities of travel, Harry was conveniently absent, as his brother knew he would be. Bill Brant came out to him as he was tightening the girths on old Diablo.

"Which way?" he queried in a tone intended to be casual.

"Over the sky line." The answer was sufficiently general.

"North or south?"

"South. And by the way, if I wing a U. S. trooper in getting across the border, be sure and bring him here and give him the best of care."

"Traitor!" Bill Brant fairly hissed the word. "Traitor!" he shouted after Juan, as that intrepid young man rode away.

Juan Gonzaulus rode madly toward the international border. He followed a branch of the Borderland auto road into the Southwest, intending to cross the El Paso and Southwestern at a lone point, and to cross the boundary at the loneliest point he could find. Then, in the gray dawn, which is said to bring reflection after hasty action, Juan began to think seriously. Was there not something that a man owed to his blood and kin, if not to himself? A line of Kipling's poem "Sarlenow" kept running thru his brain as his now weary horse jogged on.

"The moral of this little piece is plainly to be seen,
You 'aven't got no kinfolks when you're servin' of the Queen,
You 'aven't got no brothers, sisters, sweethearts, wives, ner sons;
If you want to win the battles go an' work the bloomin' guns."

That was war, thought Juan, that was war as only a master could depict it.

Still it was borne in most strongly upon him that his duty was to go back to Las Mesas and have another long talk with his brother, even to take him into his confidence. It was not as if Harry were a well man. A man with tuberculosis was often morbid, at the best. What might Harry do if he believed his brother, a Gordon and a Gonzaulus, to be a traitor? Another unforeseen circumstance worried him. When he volunteered to become an international spy, he did not know that he had become the precise double of his brother Harry. What unforeseen tragedies this might bring up he could not conjecture. He really believed, for the protection of Harry in more ways than one, he had best go back and take him into his confidence. And there was one other consideration that took him back. What lover does not wish for one more sight of the girl he loves before he rides away to danger and possibly to death? Juan wanted to see Julia Meriton once more, if it was only for a moment. Yes, he would go back; he would lose only about twenty-four hours by such a course.

He camped in the mesquite and rested his horse till toward noon, and then mounted and rode back over the road he had come. The circumstance of his resemblance to his brother was impressed upon him that day. Twice people met him on the road and called him Harry; and both times he answered them without enlightening them. But the circumstance worried him unspeakably. What dangers might come to his beloved brother thru being the double of an international spy? It was certainly unfortunate for the two to look so much alike.

The sun was going down over the rim of the desert as he neared Willowcroft, with a rising anticipation of a sight of Julia. But he saw only an old Mexican man-of-all-work and his old woman, and a lover's chilling sense of void came over him. The place looked lonely and deserted under the last dying ray of a western sunset. He rode rapidly on toward Las Mesas, with its long row of poplars standing sentry, as it were, before its whitewashed walls and stately pillars. He again saw no life—no movement. But as he was tying his horse, Bill Brant came out to him.

"Where's Harry?"

"Gone."

"Gone where?"

"I can't tell you for sure, but I believe he's gone to El Paso. He rode into Greenacres this morning; but before he left he told me to send somebody in after old Hero tomorrow, and for me to be general manager here till he got back. Harry seemed mighty bad worried about something—I guess it is about your turnin' traitor."

"You'll please not use that word again in talking to me!" snapped Juan. "It's not a pleasant word to hear. Where are Doctor Meriton and Miss Julia?"

"Gone, too. They drove into Greenacres this morning early, with the Japanese cook to bring back the buckboard. My opinion is they're gone wherever Harry's gone. Juan, you maybe don't know it, but Harry's been likin' that girl for a good long while now; and she's been likin' him, too, if I'm any judge."

Juan suddenly felt a bitter certitude in his heart. He had suspected from the first that there was something more than friendship between these two. Now he was certain of it. His declaration to his brother—for secret service purposes—that he was in love with a senorita, together with his making Julia so angry with him, was almost sure to drive the two together. He knew Harry well enough to know that he would have held back, if he thought him, the younger brother, to be in love with the girl; but he had himself given that supposition the lie. Well, the mischief was done now; possibly the two were already married, or at least engaged. There was nothing he could do. He had acted a part and acted it all too well for his own happiness. As for this other girl he had named, she was merely an acquaintance of his, nothing more.

Juan rode back to Willowcroft determined to learn all he could. He made inquiries of the old Mexican. Where had they gone?

"Quien sabe?" The old Mexican shook his head. "All I know. Senor Gonzaulus, him that look so much like you, he come here, and him and the doctor have a long talk. Then in the early morning they all go away together. Where did they go, quien sabe?"

Juan was nonplused. Yet he was going to learn all he could, and he rode away to Greenacres. The little town was full of refugees out of Mexico, Mexican military prisoners, held on suspicion for crossing the boundary, and U. S. troopers. He inquired for Harry. No one had seen him. He inquired for the Meritons. Same result. Greenacres is the junction point of two important railroads made famous by the song, "Casey Jones;" and the town was full of refugees going out and soldiers and the friends and families of soldiers coming in. There was a perfect maelstrom about the Union Depot, and Juan realized how nearly impossible it was to trace any human atom thru that swirling mass.

He made a few more inquiries for the Meritons. "I'll tell you, Harry," said a hotel keeper, "they were here, or at least I saw their Jap and their outfit, but I haven't any idea where they went."

There it was again. That was the fourth time since he had reached Greenacres that he had been addressed as Harry. Well, the search was hopeless. The last train till after midnight had now run, and the town was growing quiet. Meanwhile he was losing time; so he turned old Diablo back toward the international border, the land of danger and disgrace and perhaps death for him.

CHAPTER III.

"HIS BLOOD IS ON MY HANDS!"

JUAN had found it an easy matter to get into Greenacres; he found it less easy getting out. A tanned and hardened warrior riding a perfect giant of a horse and dressed in the style of a captain of French dragoons is too striking a figure to be passed by unnoticed by a border cavalry officer. He was challenged. Who was he? A scheme flashed into his head.

"I am Harry Gonzaulus," he replied.

"Pass!"

A quick word was whispered to the captain by a second lieutenant.

"Halt, Juan Gonzaulus!" he suddenly changed his order.

But Juan was already fifty yards away and riding like the wind.

"Halt, or I fire!"

Now, Juan could have satisfied this captain and made him his friend by showing him a tiny bit of silver he carried, and speaking a single word, the password of the secret service men of the United States; but Juan had been a master spy in Europe, and his methods were to fool friend and foe alike; only thus could he accomplish most as a spy. So he lay low over Diablo's neck and thrust the rowels into his flanks. A switch engine in the yards suddenly swung round a curve and bathed him and his mount in quivering light.

"Ready!"

"Take aim!"

"Fire!"

He ducked very low at the last word. But the soldiers fired high above his head, as he felt sure they would. A moment later two gave chase on motorcycles, but Juan turned out thru the uncleared mesquite, and they were soon forced to give up the chase.

Two men whom Juan knew to be Mexican spies had witnessed the fiasco, and he felt that this would help to establish him solidly with the Mexicans when it became known across the border. He rode all night under the brilliant western stars, and a little before daybreak reached the international boundary not far east of Douglas, Arizona. A guard challenged him.

"Who goes there?"

"Harry Gonzaulus of Las Mesas rancho. Have you seen any stray horses pass this way? A half-dozen of ours got out of the corral, night before last, and were headed this way."

"No, I haven't seen any, Mr. Gonzaulus. By the Lord Harry, where did you get that rig?"

"My brother sent it to me from Europe. It's some kind of an outlandish uniform they wear over there. May I cross the boundary? I'll work along close to the border where you can keep me under observation."

A wave of the hand was his reply. Everybody in the Southwest knew of Harry Gonzaulus, and everybody trusted him implicitly.

Juan was not long disappearing over the horizon, and all that long blistering June day he rode straight south into the fastnesses of the Sierra Madres, a set of fastnesses he knew like a book, because he had already seen two campaigns amongst them.

Just as the moon rose over the eastern rim of the desert, he rode up to a low 'dobe house, surrounded by 'dobe walls of equal height inclosing a large patio.

"Ho-low," he bawled out. "Ho-low, Jeneral Carabeo."

"Who calls?"

"Capitan Juan Gonzaulus, lately of the Legion Etranjeres of France."

"So, camarada?" A light sprang up in the little casa. The voice that answered was very gay. "And where are you lately from, Senor el Capitan?"

"Los Estados Unidos, Jeneral mio," he answered. "Where else?"

Col. Herchal Carabeo, for it was he whom Juan had addressed as General, appeared in the doorway and the two shook hands like old friends.

"Comrade of my heart," said the Colonel, grandly, "come into my poor house and partake of all that it affords. Dios, what a beautiful horse!"

"I have named him Diablo, and he is that for speed, endurance and pure wickedness. No one can ride him but me. I stole him from a Turco, the only other man that ever mounted him, and shipped him to America ahead of me."

An old Italian woman now brought out cold roast beef and white wine, and Juan sat down to a midnight supper.

"And so," said Colonel Carabeo, "you have been in the big fight over there?" He waved his hand in the general direction of Europe, like a true soldier of fortune. "I guess our little opera bouffe affairs over here will seem slight to you now. And how are los Estados Unidos?"

"Same old Gringoes, same old jingoes, same old bingoes," replied Juan, cryptically.

"Strange they would not drag you in and make you see their point of view. Patriotism is mighty strong in most men."

"Yes, but an international boundary has no meaning for me. Why, Colonel, when I was a boy and studied geography, I used to imagine that the United States was purple, and Mexico was green, and Canada was pink. Since then I have been up in more than one aeroplane, and I have looked down upon international boundaries and seen that God makes no difference. It's the rich and the poor; they are different. I am for the poor against the rich; for the weak against the strong, for the under dog always."

The Colonel's eyes sparkled fire. "Then go back into the States," he orated, striking an attitude. "We in Mexico, we are the strong ones. We will sweep onward. We will plant the tricolor of Mexico on the capital at Washington. We—we will conquer!"

"Well," drawled Juan, "the best of luck to you; and remember I will go as far as the next one. I am one of you, if you will have me."

Juan never wanted to stick a knife into any one so much in his life as into this cutthroat; but he had to play his part, or he would have been no spy.

"I knew you'd come to us in this pinch, if you were in America," said Colonel Carabeo. "Oh, I know the color of your sentiments all right; they're red, blood red."

"I have come to offer my services to the Carranza government in case there is war with the United States. You see how I am, a plain-spoken man. If you are in sympathy with the Carranza government, well and good. If you are not, we can part company and there is no harm done, I hope. You know where I was when Fletcher Mayo was fighting against old Huerta, and altho I worked with Pancho Villa then, you know I always regarded him as a cutthroat and a scoundrel."

"Hist! Beware!" The Mexican was showing his teeth and feeling for a knife. "Don't say a word against my friend, General Villa."

"I will say this," shouted Juan, "he is a murderer, a villain, a deep-dyed and unadulterated scoundrel!"

Juan stood on guard ready to kill his man if necesary. He knew these Mexicans well, and knew there was nothing they admired like sheer daring and bravado. If he had to kill Carabeo he was certain that the latter's two or three hundred followers would flock to his standard, as the stronger man, especially after he had killed three or four of them. He had seen leaders made or unmade overnight in just this manner. Carabeo stared at him fiercely for a moment, and then suddenly thrust his knife back into his sheath and put out his hand.

"Shake!" he said. "You are the only man in North Mexico that I know of, outside of Carranza's own generals, that's brave enough to make a statement like that. Listen! I am looking for a good man to go with me to General Trevino. I want to offer him my services and the services of my three hundred followers in the event of war with the United States. I am now under a ban, as you know, with quite a handsome price on my head. I need a good man to offer along with myself, one who knows the mountain passes and the water holes and all that. I have been thinking of you for days, and wondering where you were. Will you go with me? I will make you lieutenant colonel of my regiment of irregulars."

"I'll go."

"Shake!"

Five days later, after one of the roughest and most circuitous journeys over mountains and across the worst of deserts, Colonel Carabeo and Lieutenant Colonel Juan Gonzaulus arrived at the headquarters of General Trevino, "somewhere in Chihuahua." They had left their command under the lesser officers and at a safe distance, in case their offer was not accepted by the Mexican general. Colonel Carabeo was admitted to the august presence first. The two men were closeted together for an hour. Finally Juan was called in.

"So this is Colonel Juan Gonzaulus, one of the boy captains of poor Madero's army," said the General. He looked Juan over carefully, as if he would really not make a mistake if he could avoid it. "Now, to get down to business. Colonel Gonzaulus, you have been recommended to me as a thoroly patriotic young man and absolutely discreet."

"I am thoroly patriotic and absolutely discreet," echoed Juan. He was all aquiver inwardly. He wondered what this fool was going to allow him to do.

"And I am told you know Chihuahua State and Sonora State as few do."

"As very few do," repeated Juan. "Most of the men who campaigned with me thru here are now dead."

"We have with us here a young Italian, Giovanni Cuchette, who is perfectly familiar with your political sentiments. He tells me you have always preached 'Latin America for Latin Americans, and the Monroe Doctrine be d—d.'"

"I have always so preached and acted," replied Gonzaulus. "Yes, I remember Cuchette very well. We fought together in the French Foreign Legion at the first of the war, and later spied together in Servia and Albania."

"Sit down," said the General.

He spread out a great map of northern Mexico on a long table between them. Then he began rapidly asking about this mountain, that foothill, this cattle trail, that dry arroyo, this water hole, that forested slope or summit. Juan's knowledge of the country was really remarkable, and he stood the test accordingly.

"Now, then, Colonel Gonzaulus, I am going to trust you to be second in command over Carabeo's rough riders. You will form a scouting party, very largely, and will keep General Pershing's command under observation as much as possible; and you, Colonel Gonzaulus, will report to me in person from time to time. I don't mind telling you that I trust you much further than I do Carabeo. You and he will bring your men into camp tomorrow morning, as I wish to review them."

"And what guarantee have I that you will not make the whole lot of us prisoners the moment we are inside your lines?"

"The word of a gentleman, sir."

"Very well, General Trevino, I accept that as guarantee enough."

Shall I tell how the intrepid Juan took to the sandhills of Chihuahua with a scouting party of guerrillas, and, while pretending to be spying upon General Pershing, managed constantly to communicate important military secrets to him? Shall I tell you how, when his little scouting party of fifty men was attacked by a greatly superior force of Americans, he "behaved gallantly under fire," meanwhile directing the American riflemen, by means of semaphore signals, with his rifle just where to pour in their fire and make it most effective? Juan's best tool in spying was his power with the Mexican senoritas. He would trust this one to do that commission for him, and that one to do the other, and they never failed him nor gave away his secrets.

All this for a week, and then Juan was actually commissioned to go back into United States territory on his supposed spying expeditions. He went to Juarez by train, experiencing no difficulty in crossing over into El Paso, and then, while pretending to spy upon General Bell, and while under the eye of some actual Mexican spies, he managed to give General Bell full details as to the strength, position and equipment of Trevino's forces. And all this while under the eye of one Trabajar and his servant, two Mexicans pretending to be bodyguards.

Having been allowed to depart from El Paso and go to Greenacres, he rode from there out to Las Mesas and Willowcroft on a borrowed horse, meeting again the captain who had fired upon him before, but passing no word with him. He was now smooth-shaven and wore an ordinary business suit, so that more people than ever mistook him for his brother in the street. When he reached Las Mesas he found no one but Brant, Aunt Mandy and a few Mexican and Japanese laborers there. He inquired for Harry. Brant knew nothing. Harry had never come back since that first day he rode away. Juan demanded old Hero. He must have a good horse, and evidently Harry was not in need of him. Brant demurred, but Juan reminded him that everything on the ranch belonged to him quite as much as to his brother, that Harry simply drew a salary for managing community property. So he saddled old Hero and rode on to Willowcroft.

As he approached Willowcroft, he drank in the beauty of the night. He was intoxicated with anticipation. He dismounted and knocked.

"Yes," said the Japanese house boy, "Mees Julia" was ready to see him. He was to come into the "seeting-room."

Julia was beautiful that night in a new and tragic way. She seemed older. Whereas she had formerly seemed like a girl, she was now plainly a woman.

Perhaps their mutual desire to learn from each other, if possible, something of Harry's whereabouts was largely accountable for this meeting. Contrary to what Juan believed, Julia had not seen Harry since he had, except as he had stood on the doorstep talking to her father. Juan had believed he could learn something from her, and she had believed the same of him. Again, Julia had learned rather suddenly that both these young men were in love with her, and she had been for a week striving in her honest little heart to do justice between them.

"I suppose Harry has come back?" she now asked as artlessly as possible.

"No."

"But you have seen him, surely?"

"No, I came to ask you if you knew where he was. I thought he left here with you and your father."

"No, he's never been with us. I have no idea where he is."

"Julia, I want to talk with you, I have something very serious that I want to say. Won't you come outside and sit under the willows with me?"

"Certainly, sir."

Juan did not like that "sir," nor even the tone of the "certainly;" still a crust is dear to a starving man. He meant to make a clean breast of his love for her. He meant to beg her to be his wife. He had been obliged to trust other women, inferior Mexican girls, with his secret; he would, if necessary, trust her. He would let her know that he was no traitor. It wrung his heart to treat his brother this way, but he reflected that in matters of the heart one had to be direct, primitive, selfish.

"Julia darling," he began, as soon as they were seated on a bench beside the artificial lake, "as I said, I have something very important to talk to you about. It is a matter of life and death to me, at least. My life is never safe on either side of the international boundary now. Some on both sides believe me to be a patriot and some on both sides believe me a traitor. It is the penalty a spy must pay." He was trying to lead up to what he wanted to tell her—that he was in the United States secret service.

"Juan," she said suddenly, "Juan, I think too much of you to want to see you face a firing squad, and that is what it will end in. Oh, I feel that that is the way your spying will end! And I think too much of you to want to see you stood against a wall and shot."

"Do you think enough of me to marry me?" The question sprang to Juan's lips and he uttered it; that was his way.

"Why, I have not known you very long, Juan. I could not agree to marry you right now, but perhaps——"

"Do you think enough of me honestly to bid me hope? Think before you speak, Julia, and don't flirt with me. This thing is a matter of life and death to me; it is what I got you to come out here to talk about."

"Juan, if you will agree to give up spying——"

"I will give it up if you will become my wife." The proposal came like a shot.

"Hello, Juan!" It was Harry's voice breaking in on them.

"Hello, Harry!"

Harry appeared before the two, standing straight and tall like some Indian chief. For ten days, while in hiding, he had planned and organized this coup for catching his brother and holding him.

"Juan," he said, "I have come for you. You are surrounded. You shall never return to Mexico to carry the secrets you have gleaned on this trip."

"Harry, I am no spy."

"Hush, don't lie! I just heard you tell Julia that you were. Juan, if you will do one thing, I will not molest you. Give me your word of honor that you will come home with me, and will not leave Las Mesas ranch again while this trouble is in progress. Give me your word of honor, brother, and I will trust you. Otherwise you are my prisoner."

"But, Harry, listen. I can't agree to that, but listen. I tell you I am no spy; you are accusing me falsely."

"Didn't I just hear you say to Julia that you would give up spying if she would marry you?"

Juan saw his opportunity for a coup that might make him the most useful spy on the border. It called for the utmost sacrifice, the sacrifice of the girl who he believed loved him a little, anyway, and of his brother's respect.

"Juan, if you do not come with me peaceably, by the God in Heaven I will denounce you as a spy, tho it will take the heart out of my body to have it to do."

Juan decided.

"Harry," he said very coolly, "if you must denounce me as a spy, then you must. A man cannot die but once."

Quick as an explosion Harry's fist shot to his younger brother's jaw. Juan was taken completely by surprise, and was knocked down and badly confused. Julia screamed. Juan tried to get to his feet, but Harry leaped upon him and pinioned him to the ground. Men were running thru the grounds from every direction, all centering on this point.

"D—n you, let me up!" Juan panted.

Harry leaped free from his younger brother and turned to give an order to Bill Brant, who came running up from behind him. Two deafening reports rang out on the still night. Juan and Brant had fired at the same moment. The next moment Harry closed in a death grapple with a man, a Mexican he had not known was near. The Mexican managed to draw a huge pistol, but Juan knocked it out of his hand. There was a melee, four men scuffling in a close mix-up. Then the Mexican drew an automatic from somewhere about his person and fired, and Bill Brant crinkled to the ground in the agony of death. Juan tore himself from his brother's grasp and ran thru the grounds, followed closely by the Mexican, and at a greater distance by a dozen Americans.

"His blood is on my hands!" he kept groaning to himself. "My God! His blood is on my hands!"

This remarkable story will be continued in the next issue of the Ledger. During the coming months many great stories will appear in these columns. If you are not already a subscriber for this paper, it will repay you to send in a year's subscription. It costs you only $1.00, and you will never regret it. Let us hear from you at once.

* * *

The Tablecloth.

"Why," demanded the Occasional Grumbler, in the tone of one who not only did not expect, but would not tolerate, an answer, "should a clean tablecloth be the most sacred thing about a fairly average family household? A clean tablecloth is not lares or penates, either or both. It's just a rag that has managed to get thru the laundry in good shape. It can go thru again in just as good shape—or just about as good; and, for that matter, if the worst came to the worst (as your wife generally expects it to), it could be replaced without disturbing the quotations on international exchange.

"But a woman never thinks about that. To her a clean tablecloth is a thing to be worshiped, not a thing to be eaten off of, and it never counts to her that no magic can bless it with semipaternal cleanliness. It's got to get dirty sometime—why not now? Nothing to it! If you overflow the gravy from the meat platter, which—thru no fault of yours—has been filled too full, or if you happen to decorate the immaculate splendor of the cloth with a nice red polka dot of cranberry juice, you're in bad for the rest of the day, and maybe longer.

"Of course, when such things happen the tablecloth is only serving the purpose for which it is put there, but that's no excuse. 'You ought to be more careful!' This comes across the table in no uncertain tones. But it isn't in the nature of news, because you've heard it plenty often before.

"I say it is the business of a clean tablecloth to get dirty and get washed, and get dirty and get washed, and get dirty and get washed. But what I say doesn't make any difference. I get in so bad every time a new tablecloth is sprung at our house that in my love for the comfort of dirty ones I am becoming slovenly in my habits. So what I say is this: Either you ought to be affluent enough to have a clean tablecloth every meal, or two or three times a meal if necessary or desirable, or you ought to be humble enough to be content to eat off of an oilcloth-covered table that can be swabbed off, without damage or distress of temper."

* * *

Half Mast.

His waistcoat was wonderful.

His tie was tremendous.

His socks were positively superhuman.

In order to display which, his trousers were tucked up to a ludicrous height.

An urchin plucked him by the sleeve.

"Lost somebody, guv'nor?" queried the youth, sympathetically.

The swell swelled with indignation.

"Of course not, fellow!" he responded contemptuously, proceeding on his way.

"Cat or dog dead, guv'nor?" queried the youngster, following.

"Bai Jove!" snapped the "nob," distinctly annoyed. "Why do you ask such stoopid questions?"

"Why, guv'nor?" called the urchin. "Cos I see yer got yer trousers at 'arf-mast!"

Ma'm'selle Felice

Or, A Studio Mystery

By Helen E. Haskell

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CHAPTER V.

IN THE DESERTED HOUSE.

AS KIRK BALLINGER took down the candle he caught a glimpse of his face in the dusty mirror above the mantel, and started. Even in the subdued light his mustache showed iron gray. He turned away from the reflection. The blood was pulsing warm and young thru his veins. What had he to do with that mirrored face with its slightly sagging chin muscles and its lined cheeks? A man was as old as he felt.

"I will show you the way to the library; it is not so dreary there." It seemed to him that the lilting voice at his elbow had a tired note. "Come!"

He followed her up the stairs, finding himself a trifle breathless when he reached the top, so swiftly had her feet sped before him. She threw open a door at the right of the landing.

"There are candles on the desk and in the sconces. We will light them. Then we will take one and go over the house to make sure that—that everything is all right. After that you may go."

"And leave you here alone? Surely you are not planning to remain alone in this empty house tonight?" demanded Kirk, anxiously.

"Oh, yes. I have stayed here many nights alone. Not lately, but until I went to Mrs. Bonner's."

"But you must not do it tonight. I will send somebody."

"I shall not be afraid. The house is full of happy memories."

She reached out and took from him the candle he carried, crossed the room, and held its blaze against the wicks of two desk candles in tall, Colonial sticks. Then she lighted those in the sconces. Ballinger watched her. He had known many women, but never before one who seemed so glowingly vital and withal so delicate, as this girl. And as to her broken promises—he shrugged his shoulders.

Having lighted the last of the candles, she turned to him with a smile. "It is really rather cheerful here, isn't it?"

"It is," agreed Ballinger, looking around at the high-ceiled room with its old-fashioned white wood and red brick mantelpiece.

Tall bookcases with small-paned glass doors were set into the wall; a deep couch faced the fireplace, backed against a library table littered with dusty books. Near one of the long French windows that looked upon the street stood a tea table with an incomplete service. Against the wall between the windows there was a roomy, old-fashioned desk, the Windsor chair in front of it pushed back as if somebody had just risen from it.

He went to a window, threw it up, and stood peering thru the chinks in the closed shutters into the quiet street below. In a brilliantly lighted drawing-room across the way a maid in a white cap and apron was serving coffee to a group of women in evening gowns.

He turned to find Felice seated before the desk, her elbows on its leaf, her chin in her cupped palms. How graceful she was! How delicate, and good Heavens, how he loved her!

He crossed the room, and, with his hands on her chair back, stood for a moment looking down at her. He longed to take her in his arms, to crush her with tenderness. He was double her age, but what of that? Love would bring back his youth to him. A declaration trembled on his lips. Suddenly the girl looked up at him.

"You have been very good to me tonight," she said softly.

"I hope always to be good to you, Felice," he answered, and bit his lip to keep back words that would startle her.

She leaned back, pressing her cheek against his hand. It was more than he could endure. He jerked his hand away, almost roughly, and with a nervous laugh threw himself into an elbow chair by the window, and sat leaning toward her, his hands clasped between his knees.

"Tell me about yourself, Felice," he said, and marveled at the calmness of his voice.

She toyed with a paper cutter that lay on the blotting pad.

"What shall I tell you?" she asked half shyly.

"Tell me who you are."

"It does not really matter who I am, does it? I am like a ship that you have spoken in passing. Tomorrow I shall have gone my way and you—yours."

"That is where you make a mistake. In future your way will be my way," he began recklessly, then stopped as a troubled expression flashed into her eyes. "Hereafter, Felice, we are going to be the best of friends."

"I am happy to hear you say that, for I feel, and have felt since I first saw you, tonight, as if I had known you for years. I have not felt so wonderfully close to any human being since my father died. He always lost sight of my blunders, looking to the impulses that lay behind them. I—I feel that you would do that, too."

In her voice there was a haunting sweetness.

"Thank you, Felice, I will try." Did she notice the huskiness of his tone? He wondered. "But tell me about yourself—everything."

Her lips took on a humorous upturn.

"So you will not take me on faith? Very well, then." There was a flash of laughter in her eyes. "I am a business woman." The lightness of her words broke the spell of enchantment that held him.

"I don't believe you," he laughed, glad that the tension was relieved.

"But I really am. Surely you must have heard of Ma'm'selle Felice, who weaves together lovely bits of cobwebby lace and ribbon for brides! Who makes bassinets for dear little babies! Whose cards flutter like white doves into the homes of all the girls whose engagements appear in the morning papers!" She laughed softly. "I am really what I claim to be—Ma'm'selle Felice, maker of bridal lingerie and infants' wear."

"You mean that you are actually in business? It seems incredible—absurd. You are too young."

Ballinger's lips had fallen apart. This was the last thing he would have suspected. The girl nodded, and again a merry light flashed into her eyes.

"Everybody says that, altho I am 21. And they laugh at my great dreams."

"Your dreams?"

"Yes. My dreams of a wonderful shop with sunshiny wall paper and white muslin curtains where all of my shut-ins can come every morning."

"Your shut-ins?"

"Yes. The girls who help me. It was seeing one of them that first gave me the idea."

"But I don't understand. What do you mean by your 'shut-ins?'"

"They are my assistants. There are five of them—all girls who have been cheated out of an active part in life and romance by some mistake of fate or nature. Some day I shall have many more." She sighed. Her eyes grew dreamy.

Kirk Ballinger brushed his hand across his forehead.

"I don't fully understand yet. Where do you do this work?" he asked.

"I cut and plan it in the big front room at Mrs. Bonner's, and then I take it around to my helpers, who live in the romance that I carry to them with the batiste and lace and ribbon. Oh, you should hear the stories I invent for them about the lovely brides and darling babies! I do it so they will put love and good wishes into the stitches they take! Ah, Mr. Ballinger, Ma'm'selle Felice turns over not only perfect lingerie to her clients, but blessings, as well. You will find them embroidered all thru the lovers' knots in every garment she sends out."

She paused, flushing as if fearing she had said too much; then looked up naively.

"Do you think me foolish?" she asked.

"No, only dear," he answered, longing to take her in his arms. "But do you make any money?"

Felice sighed. The color flooded her cheeks and receded. For a moment Kirk thought she was angry at his question. An apology sprang to his lips, but before it was uttered she looked up and smiled.

"I haven't made any money—yet. The shut-ins have taken it all so far. But they do the hardest part of the work."

"But if you make no money, how do you manage to live?"

She laughed. "I have eaten the rugs on the first floor, and some of the pictures have paid Mrs. Bonner for my bed and the big front room. There are still ever and ever so many things left, as you can see." She waved her hand to take in the furnishings of the room in which they sat. "They will take care of me for a long time. It's only the interest and the taxes that are a nuisance, and I have not let them worry me much.

"When I found that I could not pay them, and that the mortgage on the house was going to be foreclosed, or something like that, I just locked the door and went away. I might have rented it, but everybody wanted such wonderful things done to it that I gave that idea up. And going away was so easy."

"Haven't you a guardian or any relatives to look after you?"

She nodded vigorously.

"Where are they?"

"In Virginia and New England. But they don't approve of my being a seamstress. That is what they call me. After father died I tried living with them, one after the other. But I irritated them, and they made me unhappy, and so, last fall, after I had my twenty-first birthday I—well, I suppose I ran away. At all events I disappeared, and became simple Ma'm'selle Felice. I did what father would have done. When a burden grew too heavy, he slid from under."

She paused. Kirk noticed that her under lip quivered, and he was about to change the subject for her, when she went on. "It was while I was living with my aunt in Virginia that I met Larry Horner and his sister Lydia. And it was while there that I became engaged to poor Clarke Lindsey."

"Was it at this time that you and Larry Horner quarreled?"

The girl looked up with a one-sided, wistful smile.

"We have not quarreled. He dislikes me; that is all. He does not understand me, as I think you do."

Somewhere outside a clock tolled the hour. Kirk Ballinger looked at his watch and sprang to his feet.

"It is 10 o'clock," he said. "I will go thru the house and make sure that everything is all right. Then I must get back to Larry."

"Yes, I suppose he will be waiting," she agreed.

Ballinger took the candle which she had set on the leaf of her desk, and, leaving her, went downstairs and made a thoro survey of the lower rooms, all of them filled with stiff, old-time furniture, and having that look of chaotic disorder that an unoccupied house, however well arranged, so soon takes on. Then he examined the rooms on the third and top floor, lighting a night lamp beside the bed in the room he took to be Felice's own, and which, altho partly dismantled, was still dainty and feminine, permeated faintly with the scent of violets.

When he came downstairs again he found Felice waiting for him in the lower hall.

Having made sure that the spring lock in the outer door snapped automatically, he set down the candle and held out his hand.

"Good night," he said. "I'll wait here until you call down to me. Then I'll put out the candles and go. Good night, dear child."

"Good night," she murmured.

But somehow he could not leave her.

"Felice," he began.

"Yes?"

"Will you kiss me?"

The request was hardly more than a whisper. She hesitated for a perceptible moment, then came close to him, placed the cool tips of her fingers on his temples, drew his head toward her, and kissed him on the forehead. The touch of her lips was as light as a zephyr, and before he could reach out his arms to detain her she was gone. Suddenly dizzy, he leaned against the balustrade.

"Good night." The sound of the girl's lilting voice came from the dusky shadows of the third floor. He heard a door open and softly close again.

He blew out the candles in the sconces, and, still feeling heady, opened the front

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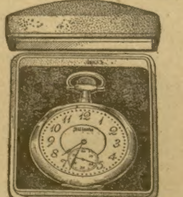

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door, ran down the steps, and turned his face toward the avenue—and Larry Horner.

CHAPTER VI.

AN ARREST.

IT was instinct rather than any involuntary effort on Ballinger's part that led him thru the maze of streets in the direction of Washington square. As he walked, a vision floated before him, the vision of a girl in a short white dress and a warmly luminous little face, in whose sweet eyes there was a look of childish expectancy. And this girl, this lovely, radiant girl, had kissed him!

The memory of that kiss thrilled him, but he was too experienced a man to count high on what the caress presaged. It had been given in a way utterly frank and lacking in coquetry. It was the kind of a kiss a child gives to a parent. There was no doubt in Ballinger's mind that Felice would have kissed anybody who had been kind to her and asked it. The thought made him shudder. Another man might misunderstand. Probably would.

Ballinger halted, whirled half around. He was tempted to retrace his steps; to go back to that lonely old house where he had left Felice, and to pace up and down before it until morning. Then he shrugged his shoulders and continued on his way. Felice was safely ensconced for the night, anyway. It was tomorrow that he must fear—tomorrow, when she would again be, as it seemed to him, at the mercy of the great city which he loved, loathed and understood.

Girls, dressed and made up in a way to challenge attention, passed him, their bold eyes holding his for a moment. To the casual glance Felice was no different from them. Like theirs, her dress, with its low neck and short little skirt, seemed designed to emphasize her femininity and to catch and hold the eye of the passing male. Until tonight he had laughed when he heard men rage over the fashions of the hour that made their wives and daughters look like these women of the streets. Now he raged with them, saying to himself that they did these things better in Japan, where the geisha must knot her obi on her breast to distinguish her from the women of the home.

And with every step he was more impressed with Felice's crying need of somebody to look after her. This much talked off new and untrammeled life for women was all very well for girls and women who knew the world. Their knowledge was like a protecting wall about them. But for a girl like Felice, who kissed a man as she would have kissed a little child—bah, there was something the matter with the times! Such girls should be taught or kept at home.

A girl with a white face and lips like an overripe cherry passed him. Her lace blouse, open at the throat, revealed a triangular bit of snowy breast. A street loafer turned and leered at her.

"Confound it!" muttered Kirk. "If nice women want to live the free lives men live, they've got to dress as we do. Otherwise there'll be the devil to pay."

Again he felt a surge of rage sweep over him at this so-called progress of the times that encouraged innocence to go about unprotected in the sex-revealing garb of the demimonde. And always back in his mind there was the picture of Felice as she had stood in his studio, with her back against his door, her shoulders gleaming rosily thru the sheer fabric of her gown. A sudden prickle of fear swept him. What if he had not been there when she had sought refuge in his rooms? What danger might she not have run into?

The question brought back the memory of Lindsey, and he became suddenly conscious of his surroundings. He was crossing Washington square, within a stone's throw of the Kensall studios.

A knot of people had gathered in front of the building. Drawn up at the curb was a patrol wagon. He began to dread what he must presently face, at the same time wondering if they had already discovered the man who had taken Lindsey's life.

He shouldered his way thru the crowd, ran up the shallow steps leading to the entrance, then stopped abruptly. Just within the door an officer and a plain-clothes man were standing on guard, blocking the way.

"I have rooms in the building, gentlemen," he explained curtly.

"What's yer name?"

"Ballinger."

"Kirk Ballinger?"

"Yes."

"They're looking for you upstairs. The young 'bo said you'd be along presently. Come on."

The plain-clothes man took Kirk's arm, and together they went up the two flights of stairs to Lindsey's apartment. From within came the sound of men's voices. Ballinger's companion rapped loudly. The door opened immediately and Ballinger stepped inside.

In the middle of the room stood Larry Horner, his face blanched to a sickly yellow under its coating of tan. As Ballinger entered the boy turned toward him, his eyes brightening as they fell on the older man.

"I thought you were never coming, old top," he exclaimed. His face contorted with a twisted smile that faded instantly, leaving it more haggard than ever. "There's a damnable mix-up—they are trying to put it over on me."

Ballinger's glance shifted from Larry to one after another of the four men gathered about him, two of them in the blue uniform of the police service, two in ordinary clothing.

"Put it over on you? I don't understand."

"Perhaps these gentlemen will allow me to explain before driving me around to the police station, as they were about to do when you came in." He turned to the man nearest him. "This is my friend—Kirk Ballinger," he said, "in whose studio I was just before I came up here and found Lindsey's body."

Kirk turned to speak, but Larry laid a warning forefinger against his lip.

Instead of going on with what he had been about to say, Kirk turned to one of the officers.

"What's the charge?"

"There's been a murder here. Man named Lindsey stabbed to death," replied the man addressed. "Detective Linton will tell you about it."

One of the plain-clothes men stepped forward, nodded to Kirk and jerked his thumb toward Larry Horner.

"We're holding your friend here as an important witness in the case, Mr. Ballinger. He hasn't been able to explain, in a satisfactory way, some interesting evidence found on his person."

"Interesting evidence on his person?" repeated Kirk.

"Um!" grunted the man called Linton. "We brought Mr. Horner up here with us to—er—sort of show us around. First thing we discovered was that a painting had been cut from a frame over there, and a minute later we came across it in the pocket of your friend. He had neglected to mention to us that he had it——"

"I—I had forgotten it," interrupted Larry.

A tyro would have known the lad was lying.

Kirk Ballinger looked from him to the officer and back again. His own face had blanched to a grayish pallor. He picked up a paper cutter from the table, and then, noticing that his hand was shaking, put it down again.

"Well, what about it?" he asked, moistening his lips.

"It's not up to us to decide that. Your friend had the picture, and he also had the penknife with which it was cut from its frame. There are shreds of canvas at the base of the blade."

Kirk Ballinger turned to Larry. "You had the picture and—and it was your knife——"

"Yes," said Larry, interrupting Kirk. "I came up here to see Lindsey. He wasn't around anywhere, and I was about to leave when I discovered that a picture had been almost cut from that frame yonder. It was hanging by a shred. I—I pulled out my knife and finished the job."

"I—I don't understand, Larry," said Kirk, hoping that it was only to his own ears that his voice sounded strained.

"Well, I don't either, excepting that I hated to see a portrait dangling by a few threads. Afterward I called Lindsey, and, seeing something dark up there on the landing, went up. I found him—dead. I came down again, and forgetting all about the canvas that I had rolled up and thrust into my pocket, went down to your rooms to ring up police headquarters, but before I had time to do it these gentlemen appeared on the scene. Somebody had forestalled me in reporting the matter."

"Yes, gent with a whistle in his throat called up. Said there were things doing over here," explained one of the bluecoats. "Afterward the chief detailed Detectives Linton and Murray on the case. Coroner's just finished his examination."

"What did he find?" asked Kirk.

"That the man was stabbed by somebody, as yet unknown, with an Italian stiletto."

Kirk sighed his relief. "Guess that'll let you out, Larry," he said. "But who was it telephoned?"

"Don't know that," replied the officer, "all we know is what the chief said—'a man with a whistle in his windpipe.' He didn't give his name nor leave no card."

"Baylerot!" Kirk Ballinger bit back the exclamation, and, hoping that nobody had caught the name, turned to Detective Linton, who was unrolling a square of canvas which he had taken from his pocket.

"That the picture?" demanded Kirk.

"Um!" replied the officer, and smoothing out the canvas, held it beneath Kirk's eyes.

Kirk looked at it, and for a moment it seemed as if his heart had leaped clear of its moorings. It pounded in his throat, suffocating him, while he stared dumbly at the picture which the officer held. For on it was painted the figure of a girl in a filmy white gown. She was seated in a high-backed chair, her body poised forward, her lips parted as if she were about to speak. It was a miniature portrait, vital, vivid, the kind of thing that the French love to paint and that Clarke Lindsey had learned to do with marvelous effect, during his long residence in Paris. And—it was the portrait of Ma'm'selle Felice, looking exactly as he had seen her less than half an hour ago, excepting for the expression in the eyes. The eyes of the living Felice had a sweet unknowingness. Clarke Lindsey had put into the eyes of the pictured Felice that elusive something that a man longs to see in the eyes of the woman he loves—the indefinable look which belongs to him alone and is as evanescent as the shadow of a humming-bird's wing.

"Some hummer, that picture, ain't it?" asked Linton.

As his voice broke the silence, Larry Horner wheeled around, his fists doubled as if about to strike the man. Kirk stepped to his side and laid his hand on his arm.

"Larry," he muttered, "get hold of yourself!"

The detective rolled up the canvas and thrust it again into his pocket.

"There's no use in our hanging around here any longer," he said, and tapped Larry Horner's arm. "Come along, youngster." He started toward the door. His confreres closed in about him and Larry.

"Hold on, sir," remonstrated Larry. "Let me have a word first with Ballinger. I—I've a question or two of a private nature I want to ask him. Then I'll go wherever you say."

"All right. Go ahead. Only cut your confab as short as possible. We've been hanging around here close onto an hour." The detective motioned to his companions.

As the four officers stationed themselves in pairs in front of the door leading into the kitchenette and the one opening upon the outer corridor, Larry drew close to Kirk.

"She—you left her all right?"

Kirk Ballinger noticed that the boy's throat muscles tensed as he asked the question.

"Yes. In her own house. Don't worry. I'm looking out for her."

He was going to marry Felice, but there was no use in talking about that to Horner. Not yet, anyway.

"Of course you want to marry her!"

Ballinger started, flushing painfully. "How did you know?"

Horner raised his shoulders. "All men do—excepting me."

He spoke bitterly, altho in so low a tone that Ballinger had to lean toward him to get the words.

"What do you mean?"

"Oh, she's always engaged to some poor cuss or other, but it doesn't last." He laughed harshly. "Well, I wish you luck, old man, but be careful. Don't let her break you. She's the kind that takes all and gives nothing. You're too good a fellow——" He shot out his hand and gripped Kirk's.

"What do you mean?"

"That she has nothing to give—emotionally. Look out for yourself. She'll drop you like a hot cake when she's tired of you—as she dropped Baylerot and Lindsey, and—oh, half a dozen others." He paused, swallowing with difficulty.

"I haven't mentioned her name, so far, nor Baylerot's. I shan't. It's bad enough their finding her picture on me."

"How in the world did you come by it?"

"As I told them, I found it almost cut from the frame when I came up here the second time. I supposed it was Baylerot's work, so I finished it up and thrust it into my pocket. Then you came down from upstairs." He jerked his head toward the landing. "I didn't mention it to you because—well, confound it, that portrait always seemed to me like a public declaration of love on Lindsey's part! No man on earth could have done such a thing, in just that way, who wasn't in love with his subject. Every brush stroke showed it. It—it wasn't decent."

Kirk Ballinger's eyes narrowed.

"What an insane idea, Horner! The picture was exquisite, wonderfully delicate and understanding, about the best thing I ever saw by Lindsey. But indecent? You are either in love with the girl yourself or you're mad."

"In love with a woman who has no soul? Oh, no! I pity her, sometimes, because she is peculiarly alone, and weaker and more gentle than most women. But in love with her—bah! Lindsey idealized her. His painted girl is what Felice ought to be and isn't." Larry Horner shrugged his shoulders. "I see that you think me a blamed fool, Ballinger. Maybe I am. But that's neither here nor there. There are more important things to be considered. As I have said, Felice has nobody to look out for her. So it's up to us to keep her name out of this mix-up. We don't want her engagement to that greasy foreigner blatted over the town, as it will be if a copy of her portrait gets into the papers. Fortunately they don't seem to lay any stress as yet upon this picture in particular. They seem to think that it was the murderer's intention to lift a number of pictures; that he sneaked up here with that end in view, and was interrupted by Lindsey."

"That's probably just how it was."

"Maybe. I'll not argue the question, as I'm mighty well satisfied to let it go at that." He shrugged his shoulders indifferently.

"Look here, Larry, don't carry this quixotism too far. It's all right for us to keep Felice out of this thing, but confound it, Baylerot ought to be made to tell what he knows. It was he who telephoned."

"Granted. He probably ran into Lindsey's body as I did, and made a quick exit. It's pretty certain in my mind that whoever killed Lindsey had made his getaway long before Baylerot's arrival on the scene. Besides, the moment we speak of Baylerot we open up the whole bag of tricks. There's plenty of time for that after Felice is well out of the way. Marry her if she'll have you, but get her out of the country."

Larry Horner squared his shoulders and turned as if ready to go with the waiting officers. Kirk laid a detaining hand on his arm.

"Do you realize, lad, that you're like

(Continued on Page 15.)

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CHAPTER IX.

FOR several hours Royse heeded this admonition. But as the sun climbed higher, beating down pitilessly, he filled the shallow pannikin with increasing frequency. He promised to make up for it by curtailing his allowance later. Once he caught himself refilling it—he had tossed off the first at a gulp.

"Can't help it," he muttered. "Got to have it this time." It was only when he found the water bag leaking badly around the spigot that he denied himself. This was after noon, and it might have leaked a quarter of an hour before he discovered it. His supply was appreciably diminished, at any rate. So, inverting the bag, he went on for an hour without a drop. Then he emptied the pannikin twice.

He began to feel faint and dizzy. The desert appeared a huge monochrome. No shadow of a cloud crossed the immeasurable space of blue. Eagle Peak looked near, but hours that were torture brought it no nearer. The way before him stretched out into an old basin, level as a dancing floor. He could have sworn each grain of the alkaline dust he trod was white hot. He felt it burn thru the soles of his shoes. The air quivered in the heat until it seemed that even the giant cactus and the rigidly erect yucca plants, that had the basin to themselves, moved up and down and then horizontally.

The torment at the pit of his stomach grew unbearable. Water seemed to intensify it. His tongue became parched and swollen, and drink after drink allayed the suffering only momentarily.

From the position of the implacable brazen disc, he judged it to be after two o'clock. Ahead was an endless vista of this same burning hell. He had admired the beauty in paintings of the desert, but the reality was a death-mask.

Then from a tuft of razor-edged grass sprang the purple kitten.

"Your lips are bleeding," said the colored imp.

Taking deliberate aim with his revolver Royse shot the phantom thing thru the heart.

"You're wasting your lead," reproved the cat, bowing elaborately.

Royse mumbled a curse, staggered, and limped on. The cat, on its hind legs, pranced before.

"Sauterne," murmured the thing. "Sauterne."

"Can't stand this much longer," said Royse, in a thin, strange voice.

"What if you had some old Moselle?" insinuated the cat, "what then?"

"You fiend!"

"This morning I had some Spanish port that was ninety-two years old, and some Kurchwasser, and two quarts of Krug, and four Zackarack and three Stinger cocktails——"

As if to prove this the cat reeled on one foot.

The man groaned. "Where did you get all this?"

"Just over that hill yonder—there are palm trees and cool fountains and teakwood tables——"

"You're a liar!"

"Indeed I am not—they make the best rickey I ever tasted."

"Well—no, I won't go with you."

They had come to the edge of the basin. The desertscape blurred before his eyes. His brain was whirling. He stretched himself in the chaparral.

"Going to die here?" inquired the cat.

"Yes."

"I'll eat you."

"I don't care."

"And then I'll eat the old man."

Royse was on the brink of unconsciousness.

The Old Timer! He would die unless speedily rescued. Struggling to his feet, Royse drained the water bag and threw it aside. That was something. Despite its decreasing weight the bag had seemed to grow heavier on his shoulders with each mile. He still had the canteen.

"I must pull myself together. I must buck up. I must make it," he kept repeating.

"You never will in this world," said the cat.

Royse believed this, but lurched on grimly. Determined to make the water hole, he fought doggedly for every step—and each step seemed a rod.

"Listen to me," said the purple one, halting the procession. "I know where you can get a pint of gin, a quart of orange juice, and two gills of grenadine."

"Where?"

"Fortieth and Fifth avenue—the Ladies' Bar," chuckled the cat.

"Make mine buttermilk," said Royse, unsteadily.

Black, volcanic rocks appeared before him. He could have sworn that they were not there a moment before. He sat down, gasping. Ordinarily a man with the water Royse had would not have suffered so greatly in this time. He had come, perhaps, twenty-six miles. Certainly no one in good physical condition and inured to the desert heat would have been so soon overcome.

He fought a double battle. His system, accustomed to alcohol, clamored for it, and unaccustomed to the intense heat, lack of water and the exercise, rebelled against these things. Probably he would have won either of these battles, but he could not win them both.

"You're perspiring too freely," mocked the cat.

At the outset water had streamed from his pores, but now his skin was hot and dry. Furious, he leaned forward heavily and groped about among the rocks for a bit not too large for him to throw.

There was a warning whir. Instinctively he knew what it was, and drew back his hand. His numbed faculties betrayed him. He was not quick enough, nor did he draw back far enough. The next instant the hideous head of a desert "sidewinder" struck his forearm, and its fangs fastened in his flesh.

He shook it off madly, starting to his feet. His eyes blazed with mingled anger and terror as he emptied his revolver at the rattlesnake, endeavoring to escape with that peculiar see-saw locomotion responsible for its nickname. The fourth bullet mangled the ugly head, and the reptile floundered convulsively. Royse watched it, fascinated.

"Good NIGHT!" said the cat tragically. "Good NIGHT!"

He sat down with a dull sense of fatality.

"This is the end, sure," the cat consoled.

Royse thought of the Old Timer—he hoped he would succumb to weakness before death from starvation and thirst ended his sufferings. They would find him first—and then the old man.

"Do you know what those are?" asked the cat, pointing with a fore paw to two great, black birds wheeling lazily on high.

"Vultures?"

"No, Angels of Death."

And the purple one fell gleefully to doing a "danse macabre."

For some moments Royse sat as one paralyzed. Rage filed him as he saw the rattles on the snake's tail quiver.

"D—n you!" he cried, aiming a kick at it. "You'll live until sundown! I'll die before you——"

The purple incubus sat looking at the "sidewinder." Royse had slashed his arm to make it bleed, but his giddiness had caused him to slash too deeply, and he had been compelled to check it with a tourniqet improvised with a handkerchief and the barrel of his revolver. The bite had been near a large artery. Already he felt the venom was working—his arm had swelled.

"It stops the heart, you know," offered the cat, with a professional air.

Royse had been thinking that and all the rest of the things he had heard of the effects of snake poison—he had noticed before now that the cat had a way of speaking his thoughts. "And," the cat continued, "they do say it causes the walls of the blood vessels to crumble."

"What of it?" Royse was defiant.

"Oh, nothing, except it won't be a pleasant death. If you had a little high-proof whisky—only a pint of all you've had—it would save your life."

His arm was paining frightfully. Strangely enough his desire for water was gone. Slowly his head began to turn on his shoulders—no, it was the earth turning. Everything moved around him. The black rocks danced an obscene saraband.

"Do you see them, cat?" he asked. "The stars—what are they doing out in the daytime?"

"Those aren't stars. They're aeroplane hearses."

"You're talking foolishness."

But no, perhaps the cat was right—they were black. Now they moved as if in platoons, completely obscuring the light. Suddenly he shrieked aloud.

"Look out, cat, the sky is coming down!"

Down toward the earth rushed the welkin—he was sure it would crush him. Now it rushed back until there was no sky.

"Who is singing?" he demanded—some one was singing a musical comedy chorus.

"I am," answered the purple fear.

"But I see dancing girls——"

"The poison's working—it's at your memory now."

"And all those lights—it looks like Broadway."

"It is Broadway—and you are drunk again."

"Quick, cat, get a taxicab! That policeman! He must not arrest me!"

"Hit him with one of these cobblestones," suggested the cat.

He fumbled until a piece of rock came into his hands—he must stop the cop. It was too heavy—he could not throw it. Frantically he strove to break it with his hands.

"I can't!" he screamed.

"Your knife," said the cat, sternly.

He hacked at it viciously—it gleamed a dull red-gold.

"Yes," said the cat. "It's gold—there are three little heaps of that same rock over there."

"Gold? On Broadway?" he said, skeptically.

"Good joke on the paving contractor—the idiot mistook New York for Heaven."

But the cop was coming on. Royse raised his arm to throw.

"Don't throw!" shouted the cat. "Give it to him and have him indicted by the grand jury."

Royse forgot everything save the implacable minion—still he advanced.

"Don't arrest me, you fool!" he cried. "Can't you see it's gold?"

Would nothing stop the bluecoat? He threw the gold with all his strength. The policeman dodged and advanced, smiling.

"Ha, cat! A phenomenon and a paragon—an unbribable policeman!"

"No wonder," said the cat, "it's one of those new policewomen."

That was easy—he would make love.

"Darling," he began, swaying to his feet, "don't pinch me—that's a good girl——"

He fell, huddled up, on his face. Everything stopped. Then the cat's voice:

"She shot and killed you, of course. How do you like that Welsh rarebit you are eating?"

"Good, but very dry," Royse replied.

He had a vague, aloof feeling that he was being picked up.

"It's all right, old man, a waiter is merely putting you in a taxicab," the cat said soothingly.

"Why does he let my feet hang out of the window like that?"

"Stupid of him—I'll speak about it."

The cat was wrong again—it was a waitress.

"You purple devil!" he exclaimed. "Will you tell me how a waitress can go around in Eve's spring suit without police interference?"

"Must have a drag," responded the beast.

They were moving.

"Cat, do you remember the name of that restaurant?"

"Yes," purred the beast. "I do, but I won't tell."

And then all grew dark.

* * * * *

For more than a mile, Salida, fatigued as she was, had been running. Every unit of reserve strength she possessed was called into play. The stamina inherent from superb forbears helped her fight on. She saw from the first that something was wrong.

The terrible strain had left great hollows about her eyes and drawn hard lines in her face. Her delicate limbs were a-quiver with weariness as she halted and surveyed the situation. Falling, Royse had dragged himself to a niggerhead cactus, a few feet from the gold "blow." He had torn a piece from the cactus and chewed it frenziedly. How could he know there was no moisture in it?

She knelt at his side, her eyes filled with tears, and talked aloud in her grief.

"Oh, am I too late? Am I too late? Can you not speak? It is your friend. Please, Nedroyse—oh, you must live! I

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want you to live—I need you—you must live—because I——"

She stirred a little and she called his name, speaking it as if one word.

"Somehow, I will save him," she promised herself.

His eyes, half-closed, had a ghastly look. His tongue, black as the rocks, protruded. Then she saw a piece of the rock his knife had split on a cleavage line. The almost pure metal shone smolderingly in the sun.

Her head felt light. She pressed her hands to her eyes and forced herself to think.

"He has found the sacred spot of my people. The lust for gold cannot be cured. He will come again and die, maybe with the riata of coyote hide——" A revolting thought assailed her. "He will die soon now, anyway—the worst is over—he will never know. It will be better—he will then be cured of drink. You are a Los Coyote—you cannot be faithless to your tribe. You will die too if you try to save him——"

Breaking into half-hysterical sobbing she faced herself with the truth. He was the only happiness she sought.

"I love him! More than everything else, I love him! I cannot let him die—alone."

Impelled by a surge of love, irresistible, she bent and kissed his forehead. It was dry as parchment and feverish.

"He must have water soon or he will die." She spoke as if some one were near.

As she put her arms beneath his shoulders his lips moved. She barely caught the words.

"Gin—the Ladies' Bar—make mine buttermilk."

Then she saw the tourniquet and the gash in his arm. The swelling told her the story instantly.

"Madre de Dios!" she sobbed in horror.

There was no hesitating. Pressing her lips to the wound she sought to draw any venom remaining. She loosed the tourniquet, letting a little blood.

"How long has it been?"

She looked about hurriedly for the bivora yerba, a plant the leaves of which are used by the Indians as an antidote for rattlesnake venom, yet feeling her search for it here would be vain.

She espied the canteen—there was still water.

"A Dios gracias!" came from her burning lips.

She had no thought of drinking first—she would have given her blood for him to drink if told it would save him. She allowed the water to trickle down his dried and swollen throat.

"No more, now—he will need the rest before Coyote Wells."

With a handful of the alkaline dust and a few drops of water she made a paste which she applied to the wound. She found matches in his khaki jacket, and soon had a crackling fire of greasewood sticks. In this she placed several pieces of the porous, volcanic rock.

Cutting a strip of flannel from his shirt sleeve, she saturated it and sat by him, moistening his tongue, lips and eyelids from time to time. He breathed easier and his eyes closed. Once she kissed them gently. This was very pleasant—it helped her to forget the weariness and thirst, and worst, her anxiety for him. So she kissed his hand and then his fingers, one by one.

"It will not hurt him," she reasoned, "and it does me good. I may never be able to kiss him if he lives."

After a while she kissed his lips—the joy nearly overcame her. It made her dizzy—molten gold flowed in her veins. Then she discovered the rocks to be white hot. Raking one out with a stick she held it between two stones and pressed it firmly to the wound. Royse moved uneasily and groaned.

"Am I nearer to Broadway or Fifth avenue?" he muttered.

Her joy at the prospect of his returning consciousness became acute embarrassment at the thought of having him see her.

"Well," she decided philosophically, "it cannot be helped. Maybe he will excuse me."

Soon the sun would set—and then the moon.

"Salida," said she gravely, "you are a fool," and gave the matter no more thought.

Royse did not regain consciousness, but lapsed into a stupor which frightened her until she found his heart was beating regularly. He would be better off that way, she reflected.

The sun had dropped behind Eagle Peak. Jagged streaks of red traversed the sky above—the heavens, a background of lovely pink, shaded off to a faint light olive and finally into exquisite turquoise. There was the beauty of suggestion in it. It was as if the Master Painter had dashed a few broad strokes and paused for something, as artists will.

There was a slight wind stirring from the east—Salida prayed it might not increase until she reached water with her burden. She knew the disadvantages of a windstorm on the desert.

At first she thought of carrying him. She abandoned this idea, not without some reluctance, for she frankly liked to feel him in her arms.

"He is too heavy," she sighed.

So lopping branches from the largest shrubs and slicing the sleeves of his coat into strips, she made a rude litter. In the course of this effort she came upon the remains of the "sidewinder." She spurned him vindictively with her little, bare toes. Tia Nectarina had said——

"The sacrifice!" exclaimed Salida. "A sacrifice is necessary to find happiness."

Straightway she dragged the snake to his funeral pyre, and replenishing the blaze, duly immolated him.

"May all your relatives die suddenly," she prayed with great earnestness.

She had fulfilled tradition.

* * * * *

A hazy realization of being in bed came to Royse.

"Here, take yer medicine, mon," said a voice with a burr.

Obediently he swallowed a spoonful of something villainous and gagged over the alcohol in it.

"How did I get here?" he asked, upon recovering his breath.

McIntosh, the little doctor, had not been at all confident of pulling this patient thru.

"Will ye lie still and ask no questions?" snapped the doctor.

"But I want to know," Royse protested. "I'll feel better——"

"Well, ye were brought in from Los Amigos," said McIntosh, impatiently.

"How did I get there? Who brought me in from the desert?"

"Desert?" the doctor was astonished. "Ye were no on the desert, mon. A gur-rl from the reservation found ye in the brush. Had she no carried ye to Los Amigos, he that comes after me would hae ye i' charge."

"I tell you, sir, I was on the desert, at least forty miles from water," declared Royse, fiercely.

McIntosh shook his head pityingly. It was strange the delusion should persist so long after the delirium.

"Ye've been a heavy drinking mon?"

"Yes," said Royse.

"The alcohol in yer system saved yer life," informed McIntosh, triumphantly.

"Do you think so?" Royse was not interested.

"I know it. The next time prohibition comes to a vote in the county I shall use ye as an argument against it."

He stepped to the door and looked out.

"What do ye say if I prescribe an imme'jut stimulant of three fingers of this?" he asked, holding out a flask.

"Fine!" smiled Royse, as a matter of habit.

The doctor poured the liquor in a glass and handed it to him. Royse wet his lips.

"Here's how, Doc——"

For a fraction of a second the glass halted at his mouth. Then it dropped from his hand, spilling the liquor on the bedspread.

"What's the matter? What ails ye, mon?" asked McIntosh.

"I don't know," faltered Royse. I couldn't stand the smell of it even—it made me—sick. I—I hate it."

The doctor felt the young man's pulse. Here was a puzzle.

"Ye remember the rattlesnake biting ye?"

"I do—it was a 'sidewinder'."

"That is strange," thought the doctor. "They never leave the desert." But he pursued the examination in the interests of science and personal liberty, especially the latter.

"Ye remember cutting yer ar-rm?"

"Yes."

"And cauterizing it?"

"No," said Royse, blankly. "I don't remember that—the waitress must have done it."

"The waitress?" echoed McIntosh, suspiciously. "Mr. Royse, did ye have any spirits with ye?"

"Not a drop."

"What do ye mean—the waitress?"

"The Hebe that put me in the taxicab on Broadway——"

He stopped short with a foolish grin. Here was something he could not comprehend. Obviously it was nonsense, and yet—he could recall moments of fragmentary consciousness. There was one moonlit picture he would never forget—and a kiss! He felt it on his lips. He could not tell McIntosh that—perhaps after all it was all moonshine—perhaps a mirage. His head began to whirl again.

"Ye'd better go to sleep," McIntosh advised, and gave him a hypodermic.

Royse was awakened by voices at the door of the darkened room.

"He's asleep, Salida." It was Mrs. Briggs' voice as the door was opened and shut softly. "Doctor McIntosh says he'll be all right, but he has delusions—he thinks he was out in the desert. I'll tell him you were here. He'll want to thank you for saving his life——"

"Hey, Mrs. Briggs," interrupted Ned, "I'm awake! Let Salida—Miss—Miss—ah—Los Coyotes—come in and talk to me."

"Well, all right, but don't talk too long, Salida," instructed Mrs. Briggs and withdrew.

She put out her hand timidly. Royse looked at it a long time and then kissed it before looking up at her. How slender and straight she was.

"Your experience seems to have left no trace," he said at last.

"What experience?" She smiled down at him.

What was her experience? How much of what he thought he remembered was truth and how much figmentary? Would she tell him?

"Salida, will you tell me something?" he pleaded.

"Maybe," she replied, looking away.

"Where did you find me?"

"At the edge of the desert."

Her eyes met his steadily, yet he felt she was evading.

"Was it near Coyote Wells?"

"No, some distance—maybe four miles—north."

"Salida," he sought to take her hand, "wasn't I a good ways out in the desert when you found me?" he asked gently.

"Please—you must not ask me about it."

"Will you tell me this," he persisted, "was I near a mine—did you see any gold around me?"

"No," she replied, regaining composure, "you were near a pile of rocks—there are hundreds just like it all over the desert. But there was no gold."

"Thank you," he said. "I think I understand something of what you did for me—tho I don't know just how it happened or how you managed to do it."

He paused, looking at the white shirtwaist and the gray skirt.

"I am glad I could help you," Salida said happily.

Of a sudden he sat bolt upright, strangely agitated.

"The Old Timer—the old man—he is out there alone—dying. I started to get help for him. Please tell some one, quick. They will be too late. I—I must get up—I can tell them where he is——"

Gently Salida pushed his shoulders back against the pillow.

"Do not worry," she said, in the tone one uses with a frightened child. "They found him."

"Was he——"

"He was dead—it was too late. A mountain lion found him first. You have been in bed a week. He was very old, anyway."

Royse lay back, closing his eyes. Salida began to feel embarrassment.

"Can he possibly know of my kisses?" she asked herself.

There was nothing primitive about her now. She had conventional qualms in their aggravated form—too late, fortunately, for Royse. To herself, she freely admitted her love for him. But it was so hopeless, so impossible, to her mind.

An impulse to kiss him now, while he lay there, and then go quickly away, back to her people, almost mastered her. She feared he would go soon. Her keen sense of smell caught the odor of the liquor. He saw her glance.

"No, don't think that—I couldn't drink it. The doctor off—that is, he prescribed it for me, and I turned against it."

"You are cured of drinking?"

"Yes, I hope so. I don't know for how long."

"Oh," she exclaimed, "if you find out what did it you'll be all right, will you not?"

"I know I'll stay cured as long as I have the remedy at hand. I have learned to care for something—more than I do for drink——"

Gold? Did he mean that? The desert and the mine? He must never go back there—in any event gold spelled ruin for him. He had told her that too much money was his curse.

"Is what you care for—gold?" she asked faintly.

"Yes, it is gold, pure gold."

He was smiling at her that smile she loved.

"I don't think I shall ever look another drink in the face," he ended.

"I—I am—glad."

"Sure enough?"

"Glad you will not drink any more; but I am sorry you like gold."

"Shall I tell you where the gold is?"

She did not answer.

"Salida, dear," he said, rising on one arm and stretching the other toward her, "it is moonlight. I am somewhere in one of those little canyons out there in the desert. I hear a coyote bark, and then I see the bravest woman in the world stumble and fall to her knees——"

"Oh!" said Salida, her face aflame and not daring to look up. "Oh!"

"Behind is the desert—pitiless, cruel. It stretches its skeleton fingers to draw me back. The most beautiful woman in the world—to me—comes to my side, and pours into my mouth the last few drops from the canteen—when she's choked for water herself. And then—would you believe it, Salida?—she kisses me. If anything saved my life it was that kiss."

The girl was crying.

"And the gold, Salida—the gold is in your heart."

He took her hands and drew her to her feet at the bedside. She was positive he could hear the pounding of her funny little heart.

"Salida, mia," he said softly, "I don't know why or how, but I know a little of what you did. I love you, Salida—love you! Will you kiss me—again?"

A wave of tenderness dominated her. She thought she would suffocate with the happiness she defined as bubbling inside her—and she leaned over and kissed him. He would hate her for a silly baby. She had dropped tears on his face.

"Why do you cry, dearest?" he asked, stroking her hair. "Don't you love me—a little?"

She nodded a vigorous affirmative, but the tears only fell faster. Kneeling, she hid her face against the coverlet. His arm was about her shoulders.

"What are you crying for?" and she felt his lips touch her hair.

"Be-cause I—am—ha-ppy!" she sobbed. "Oh! It hurts me here when I think of losing you."

His arm tightened.

"Salida, darling," he murmured in her ear, "if I write a telegram to my partners telling them I am going to marry the loveliest and bravest girl I have ever met, and——"

"Don't you see, Nedroyse," she interrupted, bewildered, "I am only—an Indian. I am not a lady at all. Just—just 'la fam rooze!'"

"And the daughter of one of America's first families," he went on triumphantly. "If I telegraph that, and say I'm leaving in a week for a honeymoon around the world—will you send it?"

"Yes," said Salida, in a confusion of amazement and happiness. "Yes, but I—I have not anything to wear!"

The End.

* * *

Willing to Obey.

Mrs. Newcom—"Before we were married you said that my slightest wish would be your law."

Mr. Newcom—"Exactly, my love; but you have so many vigorous and well-developed wishes that I am as yet unable to decide as to which is the slightest."—Puck.

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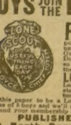
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  I'm going to write a lot.
One little chink right in the roof
  Is where I mailed a letter
Straight to the Queen of Fairyland—
  Could you have found a better?
I know the carrier dove flew down
  And took it in his bill,
And flew straight off to Fairyland
  O'er field and wood and hill.
Do I expect an answer soon?
  Why, yes, of course I do!
But when or where or how 'twill come
  I know no more than you.

—K. N. Birdsall.

*

THE BEAR KING.

There was once a little bear who wanted to be a king. All day long and half the night he thought over and over again: "How nice it must be to be a king and sit on a throne and wear a crown. How I should like to be a king!"

At last one day he told his Aunt Susan of his desire, but his Aunt Susan was unsympathetic.

When the little bear sat up on his hind legs and folded his paws and said, "Oh, Aunt Susan, I do so want to be a king," all his Aunt Susan did was to say crossly:

"Run along and don't bother me. I'm sleepy."

The little bear was rather discouraged. "Nobody seems to help me," he said. "I guess I will have to go out into the world and see if I can find anybody who has a kingdom to give away."

So he set off at once and made his way thru the thick forest till he came to a broad white road, down which he trotted rather cautiously, for he had never been out of the forest before and he was rather scared. By and by he came across a big black dog who was lying asleep in the sun. "My goodness me!" thought the little bear, "what sort of a creature is that?" for he had never seen a dog before and he was afraid of it. So he tried to steal past without disturbing it. But just as he got within a few feet of him the dog woke up with a jump.

The little bear was frightened, but he was not nearly so frightened as the dog, who straightway made off down the road as fast as his legs would carry him.

"Well, well, well," said the little bear to himself. "He was afraid of me, I guess I must be ferocious-looking," and he trotted happily on his way.

He felt so encouraged at having frightened the dog that when he came upon some men who were at work in the fields he approached them quite bravely. To his great delight, they ran away just as the dog had done. "I must look terribly ferocious," thought the little bear, with glee. "Every one is so much afraid of me that I'm sure they will give me anything I ask. If only I can meet somebody who has a kingdom to spare, my fortune is made!"

But he never seemed to be able to ask any one to give him a kingdom, for as soon as people saw him coming they all ran away and stayed in their houses and positively refused to come out, tho the little bear waited on the doormat for hours.

At last the bear came to a high-walled city, with a moat and drawbridges and sentries, and, having grown extremely brave because of the fear he caused, the little bear approached the moat and called to the sentries who were watching him from the top of the wall. "Let down the drawbridge! I want to come in and be king!"

The sentries looked at one another "This surely must be some great magician or a prince in disguise," said they, "No mere bear would dare to order us about in that way. We had better let down the drawbridge at once, or he may change us into trees or birds or something."

So in great haste they let down the drawbridge.

"Take me to the king at once," commanded the little bear, when he had walked over the drawbridge and into the city.

The sentinels bowed respectfully and led the way to the palace and into the presence of the king.

"It can't be a real bear," thought the king. "It must be a powerful sorcerer or somebody in disguise. I must not offend him."

So he immediately got up and came down the steps of the throne with his most gracious smile. "My dear creature," he said, shaking the bear by the paw, "I am quite delighted to give you my throne and my crown and scepter if you will be so good as to take them," and the king put his crown on the little bear's head and handed him his scepter with a polite bow.

Up the steps of the throne scampered the little bear, and, settling himself comfortably on the velvet cushion, looked about him with a proud air. "At last," thought he, "I am a king! How I do wish Aunt Susan could see me!"

For a few days he enjoyed being king tremendously, but at the end of that time he began to get rather tired, and the real king and his court began to get rather tired, too.

"If this bear is really a sorcerer or somebody in disguise, it is high time he threw off that disguise and appeared in his true form and gave us all bushel baskets full of gold for being polite to him when he was just a bear," they said.

But the days passed by, and still the little bear did nothing extraordinary and kept on just being a bear. At last the real king and his courtiers grew tired of waiting, and they determined to ask the little bear if he didn't think it was about time to make some magic, for they were getting anxious about their bushel baskets full of gold.

So they said to the little bear very politely: "Won't your majesty please make some magic for us?"

"Make some magic!" repeated the little bear. "Why, I can't do that!"

"Can't do that!" echoed the real king and his court. "Aren't you a magician? Are you just a plain ordinary everyday bear?"

"Why, of course," began the little bear, but he didn't have time to finish his sentence, for at the word the king and his court swooped down upon him.

"He's just a plain ordinary everyday bear!" they cried, as they saw their dreams of bushel baskets full of gold melt away.

"Catch him! Catch him! and we will sell him to the circus!"

The little bear did not wait to hear more. In the wildest haste he scrambled out of the palace window and into a tall oak tree, and, before the king and his courtiers had time to pick up the crown and scepter that he had dropped, the little bear was off thru the palace grounds making his best speed toward the walls of the city and freedom.

The sentries who were guarding the gates threw them wide open at his approach, for they still believed him to be a magician in disguise, and out the little bear galloped, so fast that he hardly paused to say "Thank you," and away down the straight white road he ran and never stopped till he was back in the protecting forest.

There he sat down to rest. "After all," he said to himself, "I'm just as well pleased, I was getting awfully tired of being a king. I wish I had brought my crown and scepter back with me. I should have liked to show them to Aunt Susan. I must go home and tell her all about it. After this experience I shall never want to be a king again."

And he never did.

*

LIKE A LION.

Boy—"Father, why is a sentence with a comma like that lion?"

Father—"Dear me! Yes, to be sure. Capital! Something about t-a-i-l and t-a-l-e? Good. Give me something harder next time."

Boy—"No. You are way off."

Father—"You don't say so! Well, what is the answer?"

Boy—"A sentence with a comma is like a lion, because the first has a pause at the end of its clause, and the other, claws at the end of its paws. See?"

*

WHY?

"Pa, was Job a doctor?"

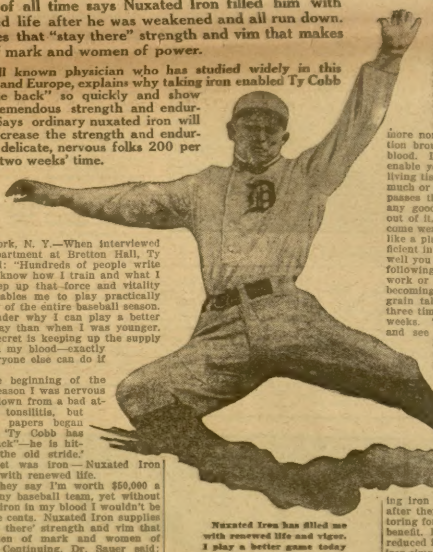
"Not that I know of."

"Then why do people have so much to say about the patients of Job?"

$50,000 Ty Cobb "Comes Back" Nuxated Iron Makes Him Winner--Greatest Baseball

Batter of all time says Nuxated Iron filled him with renewed life after he was weakened and all run down. Supplies that "stay there" strength and vim that makes men of mark and women of power.

Well known physician who has studied widely in this country and Europe, explains why taking iron enabled Ty Cobb to "come back" so quickly and show such tremendous strength and endurance. Says ordinary nuxated iron will often increase the strength and endurance of delicate, nervous folks 200 per cent. in two weeks' time.



Nuxated Iron has filled me with renewed life and vigor. I play a better game today than when I was younger.

Tyrus R. Cobb

New York, N. Y.—When interviewed in his apartment at Bretton Hall, Ty Cobb said: "Hundreds of people write to me to know how I train and what I do to keep up that force and vitality which enables me to play practically every day of the entire baseball season. They wonder why I can play a better game today than when I was younger.

"The secret is keeping up the supply of iron in my blood—exactly what everyone else can do if they will.

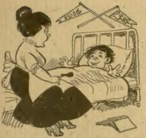
"At the beginning of the present season I was nervous and run down from a bad attack of tonsilitis, but soon the papers began to state 'Ty Cobb has "come back"—he is hitting up the old stride.' The secret was iron — Nuxated Iron filled me with renewed life.

"Now they say I'm worth $50,000 a year to any baseball team, yet without plenty of iron in my blood I wouldn't be worth five cents. Nuxated Iron supplies that 'stay there' strength and vim that makes men of mark and women of power." Continuing, Dr. Sauer said: "Mr. Cobb's case is only one of hundreds which I could cite from my own personal experience, which proves conclusively the astonishing power of nuxated iron to restore strength and vitality even in most complicated chronic conditions."

Not long ago a man came to me who was nearly half a century old and asked me to give him a preliminary examination for life insurance. I was astonished to find him with the blood pressure of a boy of 20 and as full of vigor, vim and vitality as a young man; in fact, a young man he really was, notwithstanding his age. The secret, he said, was taking iron—nuxated iron had filled him with renewed life. At 30 he was in bad health; at 46 he was careworn and nearly all in. Now at 50 a miracle of vitality and his face beaming with the buoyancy of youth. As I have said a hundred times over, iron is the greatest of all strength builders. If people would only throw away patent medicines and nauseous concoctions and take simple nuxated iron, I am convinced that the lives of thousands of persons might be saved who now die every year from pneumonia, grippe, consumption, kidney, liver and heart trouble, etc. The real and true cause which started their diseases was nothing more nor less than a weakened condition brought on by lack of iron in the blood. Iron is absolutely necessary to enable your blood to change food into living tissue. Without it, no matter how much or what you eat, your food merely passes through you without doing you any good. You don't get the strength out of it, and as a consequence you become weak, pale and sickly looking, just like a plant trying to grow in a soil deficient in iron. If you are not strong or well you owe it to yourself to make the following test: See how long you can work or how far you can walk without becoming tired. Next take two five-grain tablets of ordinary nuxated iron three times per day after meals for two weeks. Then test your strength again and see for yourself how much you have gained. I have seen dozens of nervous run-down people who were ailing all the while double their strength and endurance and entirely get rid of all symptoms of dyspepsia, liver and other troubles in from ten to fourteen days' time simply by taking iron in the proper form. And this after they had in some cases been doctoring for months without obtaining any benefit. But don't take the old forms of reduced iron, iron acetate or tincture of iron simply to save a few cents. You must take iron in form that can be easily absorbed and assimilated like nuxated iron if you want it to do you any good, otherwise it may prove worse than useless.

Many an athlete or prize fighter has won the day simply because he knew the secret of great strength and endurance and filled his blood with iron before he went into the affray, while many another has gone to inglorious defeat simply for the lack of iron.—E. Sauer, M. D.

NOTE—Nuxated Iron, recommended above by Dr. Sauer, is not a patent medicine nor secret remedy, but one which is well-known to druggists, and whose iron constituents are widely prescribed by eminent physicians everywhere. Unlike the older inorganic iron products, it is easily assimilated, does not injure the teeth, make them black, nor upset the stomach; on the contrary, it is a most potent remedy in nearly all forms of indigestion as well as for nervous, run-down conditions. The manufacturers have such great confidence in Nuxated Iron that they offer to forfeit $100.00 to any charitable institution if they cannot take any man or woman under 60 who lacks iron and increase their strength 200 per cent. or over in four weeks' time, provided they have no serious organic trouble. They also offer to refund your money if it does not at least double your strength and endurance in ten days' time. It is dispensed in this city by all good druggists.—Advertisement.



Mother—"What does the doctor say?"
Johnny—"He says my liver is in a bad way, but that he can save my bacon."

Unintentional Distinction.

A Congressional committee went to a Northwestern State to assist in opening an exposition. There was a parade in the morning in which all the visiting statesmen rode in automobiles. The local committee brought the cars around to the leading hotel. The scheme was to have two Senators or Representatives and two local men in each car.

After the Vice President and his party had been sent away, a local notable, who was acting as a major domo, came into the lobby of the hotel, where the statesmen were waiting, and bawled:

"Two Congressmen and two gentlemen, please!"

Taking No Chances.

With a view to advertising his business, a certain dentist announced that he would supply artificial teeth to the first twelve aged ladies in poor circumstances who applied for them.

The earliest applicant on the appointed day was an elderly woman in shabby but respectable clothes, who was politely ushered into the waiting-room.

Scarcely was she seated when a red-faced old man came to the place, and announced that he had come "about them teeth."

"You are making a mistake," the dentist replied. "I only made my offer to ladies. In fact, there's one lady waiting now."

"Ay, an' it's about 'er I've come," retorted the old man, gruffly. "Tell 'er 'er 'usband's waitin' for 'er, and if she don't 'op out quick, there'll be trouble. She's got a happetite like a 'oss already, and if you set 'er up wi' a strong lot o' teeth, she'll eat both me an' 'er into the work'us in a week. Send 'er out at once!"

An English Joke.

Sir Cecil Spring-Rice said at a recent dinner:

"The young swells of Mayfair and Belgravia—our 'nuts' of the pale silk sock and satin shining hair—have turned out to be excellent officers. Under fire in the frozen trenches they have climbed up from second lieutenancies to higher and higher rank."

Sir Cecil smiled.

"In fact," he said, "the Germans, shelling our nuts, have given us a lot of colonels."

A Woman's Dress.

"I have noticed," said the serious offhand philosopher, "that a woman will get a golf dress when she has no intention of playing golf."

"That's so," agreed the man with the auburn whiskers.

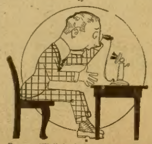
"And," continued the offhand philosopher, "she will get a ball gown when she cares nothing about dancing, and a tennis dress when she wouldn't play tennis for fear she will freckle, and a bathing suit when she has no thought of going into the water, and a riding habit when the very thought of climbing on a horse gives her the chills, and——"

"Yes," interrupted the man with the auburn whiskers; "but when she gets a wedding dress she means business. Ever notice that?"

Some Reaching.

"I read today that dinner tables reaching around the earth sixteen times would be required if the inhabitants of the world sat down at a meal together," said the landlady at dinner.

"And just think of us having to reach for things then," replied the blonde boarder as she tried to get possession of the butter.



Reggy—"Hello! Can you let me have a box for four tonight? What's that? You only make 'em to hold one? Say, who is this speaking, anyhow?"

Voice at Phone—"Eh! The undertaker!"

Reggy—"Thunder! Ring off! I want the theater box office!"

A Fine Thing for Him.

"To the true Scot there is no place like his land, and no people like his people. Not that he doesn't get away from both as soon as he can. But the pride is still there.

When the Royal Scots Greys were honored by having the Czar appointed as their honorary colonel, an officer in the regiment told the news to his servant.

"Donald," said he, "the Czar of Russia has been appointed colonel of our regiment."

"Indeed, sir, an' is that so?" exclaimed Donald. "It's a verra fine thing fur him." Then a puzzled expression stole over his face, and he scratched his head thoughtfully. "Beg par-r-don, sir," he added, "bit wull he be able to keep baith jobs?"

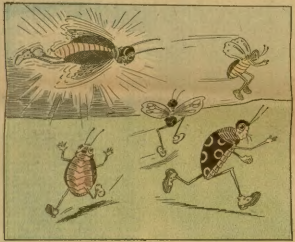
In All Over.

Melinda, bereaved of her husband, consulted her young mistress on the proper wear to disclose her grief.

"Ah wants a black hat an' a black dress, an' black shoes, an' black gloves, an' a whole black hank'chief, ma'am."

"Oh, no, Melindy," her mistress protested, "not a solid black handkerchief!"

"Honey," remarked Melindy, impressively, "when ah mourns, ah mourns!"



"Run, fellows! A Zeppelin's coming!"

A Busy Country.

An English weaver, who had spent two or three years in America, was paying a visit to the old mill to see some of his former workmates.

One of them said to him: "I hear it's all hustle and bustle in America. In fact, you 'aven't time to eat."

"Hustle and bustle," said the visitor. "Why, when I left here I spelt my name 'Mirrill,' but now I spell it 'Merrell'!"

"How's that?" asked his friend.

"Because," replied the American, "I haven't time to dot the 'i's!"

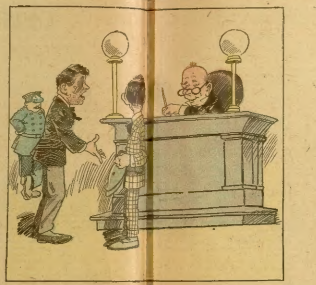
Took Him Literally.

Full of loverlike chivalry, the young fellow sought out the father of his adored one.

"Sir," said he, in a tense voice, "I have come to ask you for one of your greatest treasures—something which will illumine my whole life. Mr. Jimps, I ask the hand of your daughter in marriage."

Old Jimps, a retired farmer, was a bluff old chap. He looked the suitor up and down, and then asked gruffly:

"Her hand—only her hand? Why don't 'ee ask for the gal?"



Battered One—"Judge, I was hit a[illegible]agged by the auto of this new neighbor of mine."

Judge—"That's no way to scrape up [illegible] acquaintance."

COLLARS.

Collars, it seems, have climbed,
The movement was well timed;
Everything is mounting now,
The mercury, the cost of cow,
Whether disguised as steak or shoes—
All things except one's revenues.
So why should not our collars
Snare more elusive dollars?
For when I say they've climbed I don't.
Thank goodness, mean in height. They won't.
No, they've climbed in price, altho, of course,
We get it in the neck anyway, perforce.

What Little Brother Heard.

The man of the house was looking for his umbrella, and, not finding it, asked the members of the family if they had used it.

"I think sister's beau took it last night," said Harry.

"Why do you think so, my son?" asked his father.

"'Cause when I was in the hall last night I heard him say to sister: 'I believe I'll just steal one.'"

Sure Thing Seekers.

"Some people consult fortune tellers about investments."

"Yes," replied Mr. Dustin Stax. "But I can't see any sense to the system. A fortune teller who could give reliable advice would quit work and get rich playing her own information."

A Real Pacifist.

"So you let your wife have that new $75 gown after all?"

"Yes, so far as my domestic relations are concerned I believe in peace at any price."

A Utop[illegible]ream.

"Some[illegible]n actually s[illegible] more solicitu[illegible]ver a damaged automobile[illegible] they do over [illegible]man being [illegible] is hurt," [illegible] the humanitarian.

"Do[illegible] understand [illegible]he psyc[illegible]ogy of that?"

"I [illegible] say that I [illegible]."

"Everybody knows [illegible] there are ch[illegible] hospitals [illegible] a person [illegible] is hurt [illegible] get patched [illegible] free of cha[illegible] but nobody [illegible] ever open[illegible] a charity [illegible]ge."

Have t[illegible] Brave

"Pop'[illegible]"

"Yes[illegible] son."

"I do[illegible]lieve in this [illegible]eme of offe[illegible]izes for sw[illegible] a few [illegible]cent flies."

"Wh[illegible] my boy?"

"W[illegible]on't they [illegible] the fellows [illegible]show their [illegible] by going [illegible] and swatti[illegible] a few horne[illegible]"

SUN SPOTS.

The sun has freckles, as we know,
To mar its glowing face.
A hundred thousand miles or so
They cover up in space.

A cloud is like a powder puff—
Good thing to have about.
Sometimes we see one kind enough
To blot those freckles out.

Problem of Conduct.

Captain Jones was giving a short lecture to the recruits of his company on their demeanor in public, and among much good advice he said: "If a civilian should make offensive remarks in a public house and try to induce a quarrel, the well-conducted soldier should drink up his beer and go quietly away."

After his address he questioned his audience to see how well they had understood his remarks.

"Now, Private Jenkins, what should you do if you were at an inn and a civilian wanted to quarrel with you?"

"I should drink up 'is beer, sir, and 'ook it."

Not Vindictive.

"Doing anything to your car these days?" asked the man who was giving his "flivver" a rubdown.

"No," answered the amateur motorist, with a pained look. "My nature is not vindictive. If it were I certainly would try to retaliate for some of the things my car has done to me."

Quicker Fate.

"Isn't it awful to be eaten alive by sharks?"

"Oh, not after you've been spending some time in camping in the woods without screens."

A Change of Air.

Flanagan sat on his front doorstep enjoying the balmy freshness of the spring evening.

Presently his neighbor Murphy paused by the fence for a chat.

"A foine av'nin'," said he pleasantly. "But why isn't Mrs. Flanagan wid ye enj'ying the air?"

"Sure, Mike," replied Flanagan, "the missus has gone for a change av air!"

"Has she, now?" replied Murphy, interested. "And Oi hope the change will do her good. And where was she after goin'? Brighton, Oi suppose?"

"Then ye suppose wrong," Flanagan informed him. "Sure an' isn't she seated at this moment on the back doorstep?"

Most Interesting.

Teacher was impressing upon the class the importance of accurate observation. To illustrate, she said: "Now each of you look around this room and tell me what is the most interesting object to you and why."

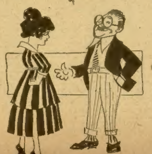
Tommy Jones was the first to raise his hand.

"Yes, Thomas, what is the most interesting object you have observed?"

"Your desk, please, miss."

"Why?"

"Billy Baker put a snake in it."



Wifey—"The cook wants to borrow a book from the library. Shall I let her have it?"

Hubby—"Certainly! If she gets interested in a story she may stay with us until she finishes it. Give her one of those long novels in three volumes!"

He Wondered.

A tug, which had suffered badly from a collision with the wharf, had undergone extensive repairs. After these had been executed the owner of the vessel called to pay the account, and incidentally to express his satisfaction with the way the job had been done.

"Just a moment!" said the manager of the shipbuilding yard, smiling. "If you don't mind, I'd like to call in the foreman in charge of the job and let him hear what you say."

A few minutes later a burly son of Erin stood in the office, and listened respectfully to the praise. As he turned to go away again the foreman spoke to the manager:

"Sure, sor," said he, "is this honorable mintion, or does it carry a proize?"

The Substitute.

"I never saw such people as you are for being afraid of ventilation! I simply must have a little fresh air!"

"All right, Miss Grouch. Son, put that new tune on the phonograph."

A Joke on Reginald.

It was the first time Reginald had ever been to a masked ball, and, altho usually of a quiet disposition, the spirit of the evening had filled him with sprightliness. Espying a sheeny dress in a very shadowy corner, he determined not to lose the opportunity of cultivating Cupid's acquaintance.

Noiselessly he approached the fair unknown, and, slipping behind her, kissed her almost before she was aware of his presence.

"How dare you!" she shrieked, crossly. "You forward boy! You ought to know better, sir!"

"Pardon me," he bluffed readily, stepping out into the light. "I thought you were my sister!"

There was a moment's hesitation on the part of the masked maiden; just one moment's.

"Silly chump!" she snapped. Then, stepping into the light beside him: "So I am!"

More Vexation.

"I'm going to think twice before I buy anything else that inflates my chest with foolish pride," growled Mr. Twobble.

"What's the trouble?"

"I invested in a new style lawn mower and bragged about it so much that everybody in the neighborhood wants to borrow it."

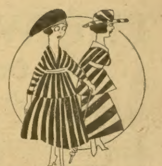
A Fond Delusion.

"Mrs. Grabcoin gives herself a grand air."

"Don't let her overhear you say that."

"Why not?"

"She thinks it was inherited."



Edith—"Trust her! You surely don't think she could keep a secret?"

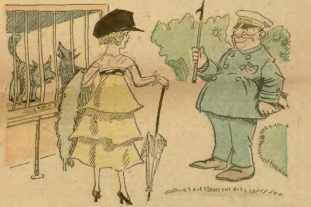
Marie—"Well, I've trusted her with other things and she kept them!"

Not for the Baby.

For three successive nights Newpop had walked the floor with the baby. On the fourth night he became desperate and bought a bottle of soothing sirup.

"Why, James," exclaimed his wife when she saw the bottle, "what did you buy that for? Don't you know it is very dangerous to give such a little child anything like that?"

"Don't worry," was her husband's reply. "I'm going to take it myself."



Miss Quizzer—"What makes the wolves in that cage howl so?"

The Attendant—"They're hungry, miss. They always howl while the other animals are feeding."

Miss Quizzer—"Oh, I see! They're the cabaret performers."

Playing Safe.

The Man—"If I should ask for your hand——"

The Maid—"I would refuse."

The Man—"You positively would not marry me?"

The Maid—"Under no circumstances whatever!"

The Man—"Nothing that might occur would cause you to change your mind? You are absolutely sure?"

The Maid—"I am absolutely sure."

The Man—"Fine! Then we can have the time of our lives being engaged this summer!"

Getting Even.

"Now, what do you want?" asked the sharp-tempered woman.

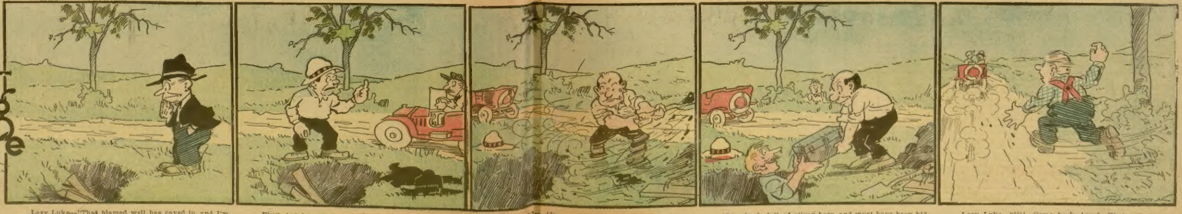
"I called to see if I could sell you some bakin' powder, ma'am," said the seedy gentleman with the staggering whiskers.

"Well, you can't sell no bakin' powder here and I ain't got no time to waste on peddlers, anyway."

"Come to think of it, ma'am," said the seedy gentleman, as he fastened his bag, "I wouldn't care to sell you any powder. This poky little kitchen of yours is so low in the ceilin' that the bread wouldn't have no chance to rise."

Our Moving Picture Show

LAZY LUKE'S STRATAGEM



Lazy Luke—"That blamed well has caved in, and I'm too tired to dig it out. I'll leave my hat and coat lying here, so somebody'll think I'm buried alive, and dig out the well for me."

First Autoist—"Quick, Hank! Bring a spade. This well has caved in on somebody, for here's his hat and coat. We must get him out of this."

Second Au[illegible] (from well)—"I've struck the bottom, Joe, but don't [illegible] anybody. There's a heavy chest here, tho, that some one [illegible] buried this side of the well."

"It's chock full of silver bars, and must have been hidden by some old prospecter. We'll load her into the machine quick and get away before any one sees us."

Lazy Luke—"Hi! Come back, here! That was in my well!"

Autoists—"We dug out the well for you, didn't we? Ta, ta!"

The Wireless Plot

Or, On Dead Man's Reef

By Marquis James

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CHAPTER X.

"WELL, old pal, it's a nasty mess at best, isn't it? And you've been dragged into it all, simply thru your loyalty to me! Words hardly fit the case when I attempt to express my gratitude." Jim Darling was speaking as he paced the narrow confines of the cell in which he and Sam Preston had been immured after their arrest in Nome.

"It doesn't strike me you have anything in particular to be grateful for," returned his companion. "Seems to me I have been more of a hoodoo than a help to you. You had nothing but luck before you met me. Picked up dying in a blizzard; then, by some miraculous quip of good fortune escaped death at sea when a whole ship's company of others went down to Davy Jones' locker But since I happened on your trail up there on the Yukon things have gone just the other way."

"But look what I have dragged you into, Sam, simply because you were willing to go along with me for old time's sake Here we are, spending a night contemplating life in its varied aspects behind prison bars, charged with the theft of $7,000,000 and the murder of twenty men."

"Oh, forget it, Jim! Everything'll come out all right. Our innocence can be established," cut in Sam .

"But can it? And after all I am not so blamed innocent. I did participate in the Nome robbery. It couldn't be helped, of course, but that isn't going to get me very far in a court of law. As to the murders, inasmuch as I was washed off the ship at the start of the scrapping I don't feel much moral responsibility there. But how these long-whiskered jurymen will look at the matter is a horse of a different color."

"Jim, your nerves are all on edge. You are in no condition to worry about the matter now. You aren't guilty of theft or accessory to theft. Why, the idea! As soon as your identity becomes known, how long do you think any such yarn as you are spinning against yourself would hang together? Son of a multimillionaire a member of a gang of swashbuckling pirates! Some sketch!"

Sam, you give me an idea!" cried Jim. "I've had my identity submerged so long I had almost ceased to think in terms of my actual self. Surely some one in Nome or hereabouts knows my father. I'll establish my identity tomorrow, and at least we can gain our liberty on bail."

"Now you're talking sense, pal," beamed Sam, an optimist under any and all conditions. "We'll get out and build a fire under this bird, Bigbee, and make him drop the whole business like a hot potato. He is in bad on that false manifest business and is looking for a goat. And the goat role is the one in which we have been so precipitately thrust Why, the problem almost solves itself!"

"Come to reason it out," said Jim, after a pause, "I believe Bigbee, who is responsible for our plight, is simply making a gigantic bluff"

"And bluffing is a game at which more than one can play," added Sam. "Only we'll be bluffing with aces up our sleeves. Bigbee was scared stiff today when you sprung what you knew about this phony manifest business. He wants to get us where we can't talk."

"Sam, you're not a hoodoo; you're a life saver!" burst forth Darling, gripping his old classmate by the hand "Just like you were at the U—always can see a happy way out of a tight hole. Say, we'll be out of this mix-up before noon tomorrow. And then, true to my resolve, I'm going to have my revenge on Salazar and his crowd."

"But let's us not cross our streams until we come to them," responded Preston "What say, let's hit the hay and get some sleep? We will need it."

And so saying the young men flung themselves down on their meager pallets, and soon both were fast asleep They slept until the jailer roused them, asking if they wanted the regular prison fare, or if they cared to avail themselves of the privilege of sending to the hotel for their breakfast, providing they paid for it. The prisoners were under no handicap in effecting a choice, and so a palatable meal soon was before them. The guardian of the keys informed them that they were to be taken into court at nine o'clock to be arraigned.

"The regular legal procedure," commented Jim. "The judge, I suppose, will fix a date for trial, and admit us to bail, if the same can be raised. I'll see if any of dad's acquaintances chance to be in Nome, and if not I'll cable the old man direct and get money for our bond. Then we'll see Mr. Bigbee, and ten chances to one after a little interview he will not be so anxious about our cases coming to trial."

"Righto!" agreed Sam. "That's the way to talk. All doped out according to Hoyle."

A few minutes before nine, Graves, the secret service agent, appeared at the jail, and after Jim and Sam had been securely manacled they were led away to the courthouse and into the chambers of the Federal judge. The handcuffed pair had roused considerable curiosity as they had been escorted thru the streets of Nome, and a crowd of townsfolk followed in the wake of the prisoners. Among the number was a party of summer tourists, who had arrived late the evening before on a steamer from Seattle. The courtroom was soon filled. Bigbee was there with a triumphant gleam in his eyes.

After another case had been dispensed with, Jim and Sam were called before the bar. The usual legal formalities were gone thru with. Darling and Preston entered pleas of not guilty, whereupon the judge fixed their bail at $80,000 apiece. When the judge had finished speaking, Jim arose and announced he was the son of James J. Darling, the San Francisco railroad builder. A ripple of surprise swept the courtroom

"That statement cannot be accepted without proper verification," responded the court. "Do you know any one in Nome?"

Before Jim could answer one of the courtroom spectators had risen from his seat and addressed the judge.

"Your honor," he said, "I know this young man and vouch for what he has said. Silliman is my name. I am general manager of one of his father's lines. I arrived last night on the steamer from the south."

Jim felt his pulses quicken for joy. He knew Silliman well; he was a close associate of his father's.

"Are you a stranger in Nome, Mr. Silliman?" asked the court.

"I know several persons here. Mr. Randolph, president of the First National Bank, and Congressman Tulane are among those who can identify me. Mr. Randolph can attest to my financial rating, I believe, so as to make my signature on these young men's bonds satisfactory."

"If such is the case, it is agreeable to the court," responded the judge.

Randolph, the banker, was summoned, and identifying Silliman, he assured the court he was good for $60,000 in bonds or $600,000, as the case might be. Bigbee, the collector of the port, viewed the quickly climaxing proceedings to gain the boys' freedom with alarm. Leaping to his feet, he shouted:

"Your honor, this is an imposition on this court. It is a gigantic conspiracy to defeat the ends of justice. I ask that the charge against these prisoners be changed to murder, which is not a bailable offense."

"Have you any evidence to warrant such a drastic course?" queried the judge, peering over his glasses.

"I have, sir."

"Will you kindly present it forthwith?"

"I regret to state, sir, that my evidence is not in proper form for presentation at this time, without jeopardizing the Government's case."

"Then you demand that these young men be charged with murder simply on the weight of your own statement?"

"I do, your honor."

"Well, that is not sufficient," ruled the court. "Murder is a capital offense and there are laws in this land which protect its citizens against false and unjust imprisonment. Under bonds of $30,000 each I think it is safe to conclude that these men may be had if needed."

Bigbee made further expostulations, but to no avail, and the transaction by which Jim and Sam were released was speedily accomplished. As Darling stepped from the prisoner's box to clasp hands with his benefactor, the collector and Graves left the courtroom hurriedly, in earnest and rapid conversation

Darling and Preston accompanied Mr. Silliman to the hotel, where the three closeted themselves in a room, and Jim spent two hours going over every detail of the entire affair, episode by episode, which had led to their appearance before the court. Silliman promised to stick by the boys and see them out of their present trouble, but warned against Jim's proposed expedition against the gold wreckers.

"Turn your evidence over to the Government, and let it attend to it," he advised. "That's Uncle Sam's job."

After their long conference, when the three stepped back into the lobby of the hotel, Bigbee, the collector of the port, was waiting there. He motioned that he wished to see Jim alone. Darling left Silliman and Preston, and crossed the room to ascertain why Bigbee, at this particular time, should desire an interview. The port official drew Jim carefully to one side.

"The establishing of your identity as the son of Darling, the railroad king," Bigbee began, in a confidential tone, "convinces me beyond a doubt that we have made a mistake in bringing this action against you. I came to tell you that I am willing to quash the charges —and apologize to you and your friend."

"Well," drawled Jim, thoughtfully, "I'm not quite so sure I want the charges dropped. The way I feel about it now is that I want to go thru with it. For, if I were a poor cuss, and not the son of a millionaire, I don't know that you would be so charitable about this."

"What do you mean?" growled Bigbee, his face darkening.

"I mean that I believe you are a crook, and tried to railroad us to cover up your own dirty work!" Jim shot back.

The big man's features flared livid with impotent rage.

"You mean to accuse——" he began.

"Put any construction on my words you choose," interrupted Jim, "and excuse me, sir, as I must be going."

He turned on his heel and rejoined his companions, leaving Bigbee fuming and sputtering, helpless in his wrath.

CHAPTER XI.

THE day after the altercation in the hotel lobby, Defendants Darling and Preston were served with formal notification that the suit against them in the Federal court had been dropped for want of prosecution.

"It's as you said, Sam," commented Jim. "The night we were in jail you forecast that when we bucked Bigbee's bluff he would run. You certainly called the turn!"

"And now I suppose you are all set for that punitive expedition down the coast to the hangout of this bandit enemy of yours," said Sam. "Come to think about it, I have kind of warmed up to the idea. It would furnish excitement, to say the least."

"You weren't so strong for it, tho, when we were in the jug with an indigo outlook ahead of us," reminded Darling.

"No, we had enough on our hands just then. I prefer my excitement in single doses. Guess I have a single-track thrill absorber, Jim."

"Well, this is a serious matter with me," explained Jim, "and has had precedence over everything else in my mind since the day I arrived here. But if you are with me, let's not let grass grow under our feet."

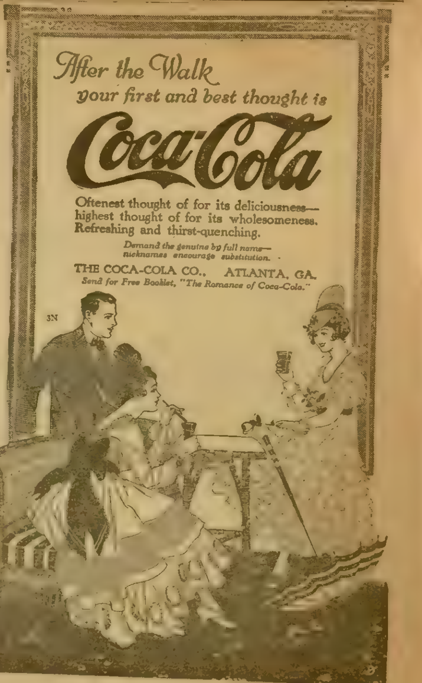
"What's the next move, then?"

"Raise enough cash to charter a boat."

"And that gap bridged, where are we going to get a boat?" asked Sam, dubiously. "Not many sea captains will be keen for such an undertaking as this."

"I can get a whaler," responded Jim, with assurance. "A whaling skipper is in for anything that smacks of adventure. But what is bothering me most is the money end. Silliman won't help us, that's certain. He says he's washed his hands of the whole affair. Only thing left is to cable Dad. It'll take $25,000 to see the thing thru. Father has never refused me anything I asked for, but I can't be too sanguine regarding a $25,000 touch, especially since he has not heard from his wayward son for more than a year."

"Well, should your father not be able to see his way clear to accommodate us, I guess I can raise the money by selling out my claim in the Klondike," said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Sam. "I struck it pretty lucky there along Sixty Mile Creek. Don't know just the extent of the vein in my workings, but I guess I could get $25,000 for it on a gamble. It might be worth much more. Such a deal, however, would involve considerable delay, as there is no telegraph to the Klondike, and I would have to make the trip back up the Yukon on the Flower of the North."

"That is out of the question," responded Jim. "In the first place, I would not stand for your sacrificing your claim; and in the second place, we could make better time going back to Frisco, getting a boat, and sailing from there. So we'll start things off by going straight to the cable office and sending a wire to the Governor."

Jim wasted a half-dozen cable blanks before he completed a message that suited him—a message that should at once express contrition for his waywardness and voice a sufficiently urgent appeal for the twenty-five thousand that Darling Sr. would be moved to come across. Difficulty was added to the task, since the cable must be phrased guardedly, in order that in transmission no inkling of Jim's real purpose in asking for the money might leak out. After many painful erasures and interpolations, the text of the message at last was completed to the satisfaction of the two young adventurers, and delivered over to the cable operator. Jim and Sam then repaired to the hotel to await developments.

They had not many hours to wait. Down in San Francisco, in the executive offices of his great continental railroad, James Jeffery Darling Sr. received his long-lost son's urgent cablegram He scanned it hastily, knit his furrowed brows, and after a minute's calculation scribbled out a reply. Calling a secretary, he ordered it put on the wires at once.

With an eager hand, Jim snatched the blue-marked envelope from the messenger in the Nome hotel. Sam crowded up anxiously.

"Well, the fond parent was prompt, anyway," he volunteered.

Jim nervously ripped open the envelope, seized the sheet inclosed, and read aloud:

"Not a cent. You got yourself into trouble without my help, now get yourself out. And I would advise that you waste no more of your money cabling. It is expensive. J. J. DARLING."

Jim wilted into a chair without a word. And for once the irrepressible Sam found no voice for his thoughts. For a long moment the two were silent.

"Shall we try Silliman again?" It was Sam who broke the spell of silence.

"Nix!" retorted Jim. "I know Silliman of old. When he says no, he means no. You couldn't change him in a thousand years. That's how he worked up from a track laborer to superintendent of a railroad."

Sam stripped off his money belt and fell to counting his wealth.

"Jim, how much have you got? I'm down to an even hundred and a quarter."

"I have less than a hundred," replied Jim. "I was almost flat when we landed here. I borrowed a century from Silliman yesterday and sent the cable out of that. Let's see—that cost me $24, which leaves $76, besides a few dollars I had already."

"Well, then, pooling our assets, we have roundly $200," computed Sam. "Two hundred plunks and we need $25,000—might as well be broke as the way we are. Now, I'm going to propose a little sporting proposition."

"Shoot," said Jim.

"Ever tackle a faro bank?"

"No, but let's have the idea," urged Darling.

"It's this," elucidated Sam. "Money can be made or lost mighty fast in a faro game. Now, since this two hundred is no good to us as it is, let's go down and do a little plunging. We have everything to gain and nothing to lose. Are you on?"

"I'm willing to risk my pile, but, Sam, I'm afraid it's asking too much of you to agree that you stake yours. Remember, I already owe you fifty thousand for what you lost on the Nome. And as for faro, I know as much about it as I do the Sanskrit alphabet.

"Forget that fifty thou, will you?" interrupted Sam. "And as for faro, the less you know or think you know about it the more likely you are to win. The first and only time I ever saw a faro board I came out a round thousand ahead. And that was right here in Nome. I'm not strong for gambling, but in this case I believe the means justify t[illegible]

I'm with you, and Sam, old man, if any one ever was a pal you certainly are that one. I'm no more of a believer in [illegible] of chance than you are, but I'd [illegible]d steal to devise a means to [illegible]t Salazar pay for his crimes."

[illegible] and Preston divided their [illegible] equally, and each with $100 en[illegible] the Montana, the most notorious [illegible] in Alaska. The Montana is far [illegible]ded palace of sin, as the ex[illegible]s. It is a dingy hole, a par[illegible]ck room of the famous [illegible]loon. Rifts of tobacco smoke [illegible] he sounds that greet the [illegible] rhythmic click of chip [illegible]t the poker tables, the clink of dice, and the monotonous drone of the voices of the faro bankers and the roulette croupiers. Here, nightly, tens of thousands are wagered, won and lost.

Jim and Sam shouldered thru the milling throng up to the faro table. By agreement they were to play alternately, so as not to wager against one another. They also agreed to place each bet on the first card out. Sam placed the first bet. He deposited $50 on the upturned ace of the board.

Mechanically the banker shuffled and placed the cards in their box. With a practiced hand he dealt a card from the bottom. The deuce of spades! Sam had lost, and the man who had bet on the two-spot took the money.

Jim placed fifty on the king. After all other wagers had been made, the dealer slipped another card from the box. It was the ace of diamonds. The boys' total capital was reduced one-half.

It was Sam's turn again and he elected to bet on the nine-spot. The banker slipped a third card from his box. A king. Sam was broke, and Jim held the $50 which remained between them. Without hesitation he staked on a ten-spot. The suspense, as the remaining players made their choices, was almost unbearable.

"The ten of clubs. Ten-spot wins," droned the dealer.

Jim merely shifted his $100—the fifty he had won, plus his original stake, to the seven-spot. The seven turned up out of the box. He had won another $100. Slipping Sam fifty, Preston made a bet—and won, making the third consecutive win for the two of them. And this marked the turning of the tide. Luck was theirs. Hour after hour they played and winning followed winning. Nome's workaday world was stirred from its bed to the tasks of a new day, when, impelled by sheer physical exhaustion, Darling and Preston quit the Montana, and with their pockets sagging down with gold stumbled their way sleepily to the hotel.

CHAPTER XII.

"A TOTAL of fourteen thousand, four hundred and fifty dollars," announced Jim, straightening from his task of counting the gleaming stacks of gold coin and the piles of bank notes arranged on the floor before him. "Got that, Sam?" Fourteen thousand, four hundred and fifty."

Preston repeated the numerals as he jotted them down on a pad

"Rather profitable evening's work" he added "With the twelve thousand five hundred I just counted and here, let's see, that makes the grand total of our winnings just twenty-six thousand, nine hundred and fifty—nearly two thousand more than we need"

It was in their room at the hotel, after six hours of refreshing sleep, that Jim and Sam took stock of their winnings at faro.

"Not so bad for amateurs, eh, Sam?" Darling commented.

"And now down to real business," said Jim. "Now to find a seaman who, for $25,000, will take us to Salazar's cave."

"We'll make the rounds of whaler captains," said Sam. "A whaler captain is our man"

Darling was fortunate enough to close negotiations that very day with Captain Crippen, the skipper of the whaler Annabel, who, having had to mortgage his ship as a result of a bad season, would have been willing to attack the British navy for a price of $25,000. With their surplus, Darling and Sam laid in a supply of dynamite sufficient to cause an earthquake, and three days after their experience in the Montana, they put to sea.

With the keen salt air in his nostrils, Jim's blood quickened in his veins as he contemplated the vengeance he would wreak on Salazar in punishment for his sinking of the City of Nome, which carried Virginia Bainbridge. But one man of the entire company would Darling spare. That was Bill Goodrich. Somehow, he planned, he must save Goodrich, for Goodrich had done the same thing for him. He would take Goodrich back to San Francisco and make a man of him.

After four days on the rocking Pacific, the stanch whaler drew opposite the Alaskan [illegible] sheltered the cave of [illegible] Salazar. The vessel kept far enough out, however, to be indiscernible, even thru the highest-powered glass the pirate leader might possess. Darling and Captain Crippen had carefully gone over the plan of attack.

They were to advance under cover of the darkness, cutting off the retreat of the bandits to their ship, and let dynamite do the rest. Crippen's crew, as darling a lot as ever sailed with a whaling fleet within the sweep of the Arctic Circle, were loyal to a man. Crippen had promised a bonus to each sailor as soon as they should be safe in port again

Night came on, and the Annabel, her nose toward the coast, crept in silently, until almost within a mile of the rock-bound shore. Darling had carefully mapped the location of Dead Man's Reef, and mounted the bridge with the captain to make sure the boat gave it a wide berth. That he might be mistaken regarding the location of this peril never occurred to him. He had looked out upon it from the mouth of the cave in the cliff, and could have marked almost to the rod the spot where death lurked only a few feet beneath the waves. But seeking the same spot from a boat at sea on a pitch-dark night is a different task.

On and on crept the whaler. Suddenly, with a crisp, crackling sound, the ship's wireless spoke. An intercepted message. In another instant the wireless operator rushed from his room to the bridge.

"An S. O. S., sir," he informed the captain. "On the precise longitude and latitude designated by Mr. Darling as the reef."

"So we've been sighted!" exclaimed the captain. "They don't know our mission and they're trying to lure us onto the reef. But here's where we go them one better."

"What are you going to do, captain?" demanded Darling, whose calculations had been upset by the wireless message.

"Why, we'll pretend we're going onto the reef, but instead we'll pass it by starboard, run up to the coast, heave to cast off in the small boats, land, and blow up the old cave, all according to plans. Our action will take them by surprise, and before they can get their wits about them they will be forty fathoms in the air."

"They keep calling, sir," shouted the wireless operator from his cabin.

"Let 'em call; we'll soon be there," chuckled Crippen.

"Sail, ho!" shouted down the lookout from the crow's nest

"Sail!" repeated the captain, in amazement. "Where away? And look sharp!"

"By the port bow, sir!" the lookout answered back.

Crippen whipped his night glass to his eyes and peered thru the darkness ahead.

"Blast my top lights if there ain't!" cried the old skipper. "There's a ship riding on Dead Man's Reef!"

CHAPTER XIII.

INSTANTLY all was commotion aboard the Annabel. Concluding Salazar had lured another victim to its doom, Crippen ordered full speed toward the vessel in distress. He intended to beat Salazar to it and take off the crew. At the same time, the destruction of the pirate band could be accomplished by ramming and sinking their yawl as it bore the buccaneers to the ship on the reef.

As the Annabel neared the sinking craft, its outlines were distinguishable thru the dark ahead. Crippen kept his

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night glass leveled on the vessel on the reef.

"If it doesn't look like the Portland'' he announced. "I'm not sure it's she, but there certainly is a strong resemblance."

"Let me take a look, captain," said Darling, quickly. "I believe I'd know the Portland anywhere."

The skipper passed the glass to Jim.

"It's not the Portland," he announced, after a careful survey. "I know her lines too well. It looks like—my God! It is the Viscount, Salazar's tramp steamer! Great guns! What does it mean?"

But before Crippen, Preston, or any of the others about could hazard a reply, a gun boomed a shot across the whaler's stern. All hands turned in time to see a gray, ghostlike motor launch slip up to the very side of the whaler.

"Ship ahoy!" came the megaphoned message from the smaller craft.

"Looks like we are overhauled," gasped Crippen, his face blanching.

"By Heavens, that's Captain Bainbridge of the Portland now!" gasped Jim. "I recognize the voice!"

And so it developed. Crippen answered Bainbridge's hail and let down a ratline, and the master of the Portland mounted the whaler's deck. The two captains greeted each other warmly. They were close friends, having been shipmates together in their young days. Bainbridge also shook hands with Darling and was introduced to Sam Preston.

"And now for explanations," said Captain Crippen. "How in the devil do we find you here, Bainbridge, off the barren Alaska coast in the dead of night overhauling the Annabel in an armed motor boat?"

"And what about yourself?" quizzed back Bainbridge. "This is a strange situation to find an old whaler in. And Darling, how is it that I find you on this scene? What do you know about what's going on out yonder?" Bainbridge indicated the Viscount on Dead Man's Reef.

"That would take hours to tell," responded Jim. "But I fancy we are both here for the same purpose—to avenge your daughter's death."

"My daughter is alive," responded Bainbridge, "for which I fervently thank God and Bill Goodrich."

"Virginia alive!" Darling fairly shouted for joy.

"Safe and sound on the Portland, which

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THE WAY TO GET A GOV'T JOB IS through the Washington Civil Service School. We prepare you and you get a position or we guarantee to refund your money. Write to Earl Hopkins, President, Washington, D. C., for Book FK 1034 telling about 292296 Gov't Positions with lifetime employment, short hours, sure pay, regular vacations.

EVERY READER OF THE LEDGER OUGHT to read these ads. Every week splendid chances to make money—to better yourself— [illegible] or exchange goods or services, [illegible]

LADY OR GENTLEMAN TO TRAVEL FOR old-established firm. No canvassing. Staple line. $18 weekly, pursuant to contract. Expenses advanced. G. K. Nichols, Philadelphia, Pa. [illegible]

MEN AND WOMEN WANTED—$75.00 month. List Government Jobs open—Free. Franklin Institute, Dep't N710, Rochester, N. Y.

GOVERNMENT POSITIONS ARE EASY TO get. My free book FG tells how; write today—now. Earl Hopkins, 1034 Marden Building, Washington, D. C.

CHAUFFEURS GET $18 WEEK. LEARN while earning. Write for sample lessons. Franklin Institute, Dept. N810, Rochester, N. Y.

$35 WEEKLY COLLECTING NAMES AND addresses. Send stamp. Ursus Company, Dept. A, Chicago, Ill.

$25 WEEKLY COLLECTING NAMES AND addresses. Send stamp. Superba Co., W52 Baltimore, Md.

PRINTING

100 ENVELOPES AND 100 LETTER heads neatly printed, any wording, $1.00. The Tribune, Mitchell, Ind.

Classified Want Ad Information

The rate for one insertion in Chicago Ledger and one insertion in The Saturday Blade is 30 cents a word, minimum 14 words, less 3% for cash. Each initial and group of figures is counted as a word, and the name and address are also counted. This is the minimum rate; neither more nor less is charged, irrespective of size of ad or number of insertions. An ad may appear in both publications of the same week, or in the Blade of one week and the Ledger of the next

W. D. BOYCE CO., Publisher, 500 N. Dearborn St. CHICAGO, ILL.

MALE HELP WANTED

NO STRIKE. HONEST, SOBER MEN EVerywhere for firemen, brakemen, baggagemen. $120 monthly. Promotion. Experience unnecessary. 686 Railway Bureau, East St. Louis, Ill.

GOVERNMENT RAILWAY MAIL, POST OFfice, rural carrier "exams" everywhere soon. Get prepared by former Government civil service examiner. Booklet free. Arthur Robert Patterson, Rochester, N. Y.

GOVERNMENT EXAMINATIONS — THORough instruction, $5. Returned if not appointed. Particulars free. American Civil Service School, Washington, D. C.

I WILL START YOU EARNING $4 DAILY at home, silvering mirrors; free instructive booklet. G. F. Redmond, Dept. 400, Boston, Mass.

BE A DETECTIVE. EARN FROM $150.00 to $300.00 per month; travel over the world. Write C. T. Ludwig, 330 Westover Bldg., Kansas City, Mo.

GOVERNMENT FARMERS NEEDED. BIG salaries. Permanent job. Light work. Write, Ozment, 68F, St. Louis, Mo.

FEMALE HELP WANTED

LADIES WANTED AND MEN, TOO, TO ADdress envelopes and mail advertising matter at home for large mail order firms, spare or whole time. Can make $10 to $35 weekly. No capital or experience required. Book, explaining everything, mailed for 10c to cover postage, etc. Ward Publishing House, Sanbornton, N. H.

REFINED WOMEN WANTED TO INTROduce Priscilla Fabrics, Hosiery, Underwear, Dresses, in spare time. Fascinating plan. Write for samples. Fitzcharles Company, Department 126, Trenton, New Jersey

LADIES—MAKE SHIELDS AT HOME, $10 per 100; no canvassing required. Send stamped addressed envelope for particulars. Eureka Co., Dept. 17, Kalamazoo, Mich.

FIVE BRIGHT, CAPABLE LADIES TO travel, demonstrate and sell dealers. $25 to $50 per week. Railroad fare paid. Goodrich Drug Company, Dept. 85, Omaha, Neb

HELP WANTED—Male and Female

WANTED—MEN AND WOMEN TO INTROduce our fine line of popular priced Coffees Teas, Baking Powder, etc. Valuable and useful premiums free. No experience or money necessary. Exclusive territory. No traveling. We pay well for your services. Employment permanent. Write for our proposition. The [illegible] Eastern Coffee & Tea Co., Dept. A, St. [illegible]

U. S. GOVERNMENT WANTS CLERKS—Men and Women, 18 or over. $75.00 month. List of positions now obtainable—free. Write immediately. Franklin Institute, Dep't N30, Rochester, N. Y.

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

RECENTLY IN THE HUMBLE OIL FIELD near Houston, one acre of land with production sold for over $200,000 and royalty. The Katy Oil Company (Incorporated) under Texas laws, capital stock $15,000, par value Five ($5.00) per share, controls over four hundred acres of land, that to (experienced oil men) appears to be as good prospective oil property as the above (before development). Now is the time to buy. Send in your order for as many shares as you can afford. Write today to Callahan, The Oil Man, 607 Kress Building, Houston, Texas.

INVEST $10—MAY MAKE A FORTUNE. OIL is making millions for investors in Great Southern Oil Fields, where single wells have produced upwards of $15,000 daily. Small monthly payments secures big interest with us in oil properties where we plan to drill many wells. Write for literature. Great Southern Oil Association, 1300 Carter Bldg., Houston, Texas

$30 FOR $1 HAVE BEEN PAID INVESTORS within year in Humble Oil Field where we have 40 acres entirely surrounded by producing oil wells, some with initial production 10,000 barrels daily. Shares $10; payments $1 monthly. Send for full description and references. International Oil Association, 1100 Union Bank, Houston, Texas.

$15 INVESTED MAY MAKE $1,000 YEARLY. Gets warranty deed, also interest in co-operative oil well we're getting ready to drill in big gusher oil territory. $1 cash, $1 monthly; 4 lots short time, $56 Particulars free. Triangle Oil Co., 407 Carter Bldg., Houston, Texas.

NAMES

WE PAY 25c EACH FOR NAMES AND ADdresses. Send dime for contract. Directory, Grand Rapids, Mich.

MOTION PICTURE BUSINESS

MAKE MONEY QUICK—IN MOVING PICture business. We start you and furnish guaranteed outfit on easy payment plan. No experience needed. Catalog free. Monarch Film Service, 228 Union Ave., Dept. C, Memphis, Tenn.

$35.00 PROFIT NIGHTLY. SMALL CAPITAL starts you. No experience needed. Our machines are used and endorsed by Government institutions. Catalog Free. Atlas Moving Picture Co., Franklin Bldg., Chicago.

SHORT STORIES WANTED

WRITERS!—STORIES, POEMS, PLAYS, etc., are wanted for publication. Literary Bureau, B4, Hannibal, Mo.

MOTION PICTURE PLAYS

WRITE PHOTOPLAYS, SHORT STORIES, poems, $100 each. No correspondence course. Details free. Atlas Publishing Co., 344, Cincinnati.

FARM LANDS FOR SALE

PROFITABLE LITTLE FARMS IN VALLEY of Virginia, 5 and 10 acre tracts, $250 and up. Good fruit and farming country, send for literature now. F. H. LaBaume, Agr. Agt., N. & W. Ry., 248 Arcade Bldg., Roanoke, Virginia.

FARMS WANTED

FARMS WANTED—HAVE 4,000 BUYERS; describe your unsold property. 504 Farmers Exchange, Denver, Colo.

FARMS FOR SALE

POORMAN'S CHANCE—$5.00 MONTHLY buys 40 acres good land, near town, price $200.00. Box 425-S, Carthage, Mo.

PATENTS

PATENTS SECURED OR FEE RETURNED. Actual search and patentability report free. Send sketches and description, or model, of your invention. My patent sales service gets full value. 1916 Edition ninety-page patent book free. George P. Kimmel, 260 Barrister Building, Washington, D. C.

WANTED, AN IDEA! WHO CAN THINK of some simple thing to patent? Protect your ideas, they may bring you wealth. Write for "Needed Inventions," "Patent Buyers," and "How to Get Your Patent and Your Money." Randolph & Co., Patent Attorneys Dept. 174 Washington, D. C.

"PATENTS AND PATENT POSSIBILITIES" is a 72-page treatise telling what to invent and where to sell it. Manufacturers constantly writing for patents. Help supply the demand. Books free. H. S. Hill, 933 McLachlan Building, Washington, D. C.

PATENTS SECURED OR FEE REFUNDED, and advertised for sale at our expense. [illegible] search and advice free. Pattison and [illegible] Patent Attorneys, 904 G Street, Washington, D. C.

REAL ESTATE

A SMALL FARM IN CALIFORNIA WILL make you more money with less work. You will live longer and better. Delightful climate. Rich soil. Hospitable neighbors. Good roads, schools and churches. Write for our San Joaquin Valley illustrated folder, free. C. L. Seagraves, Industrial Commissioner, AT&SF Ry., 1931 Ry. Exch., Chicago

SONG POEMS

SONG WRITERS' "KEY TO SUCCESS" free! We compose and facilitate free publication or sale. Submit poems. Knickerbocker Studios, 521 Gaiety Bldg., New York

SONG POEMS WANTED—FOR BEST OFFER submit manuscript to Needham Music Co., D 44, St. Louis, Mo

INVENTIONS

INVENTIONS COMMERCIALIZED ON CASH and royalty basis. Inventors and manufacturers write at once. Adam Fisher Mfg. Co., 2044 Railway Exchange, St. Louis, Mo.

FARM LANDS

PROSPERITY IN CANADA—$900,000,000 IN new wealth added in 1915. Enormous crops and low taxation make farmers rich. Wheat average, 36.16 bushels per acre in Alberta, 28.75 bushels per acre in Saskatchewan, 28.50 bushels per acre in Manitoba. Taxes average $24 and will not exceed $35 per quarter section, includes all taxes; no taxes on improvements. Free schools and full religious liberty, good climate. Get your farm home from the Canadian Pacific Railway. 20 years to pay. Good land from $11 to $30 per acre; irrigated lands from $35, and the government guarantees your land and water titles. Balance, after first payment, extended over nineteen years, with interest at 6%; privileges of paying in full any time. Before final payment becomes due your farm should have paid for itself. We will lend you up to $2,000 in improvements in certain districts, with no security other than the land itself. Particulars on request. Ready-made farms for sale. Special easy terms. Loans for livestock. In defined districts, after one year's occupation, under certain conditions, we advance cattle, sheep and hogs to farmers up to a value of $1,000. We want you; we can afford to help you. We own the land; we want the land cultivated. Our interests are mutual. Buy direct and get your farm home from the Canadian Pacific Railway. Send for free book. J. S. Dennis, Assistant to the President, Canadian Pacific Railway, 94 Ninth Ave., Calgary, Alberta, Canada.

HONEY

BEST QUALITY NEW CLOVER HONEY. 30 lb. can $3.60; two or more cans, $3.45 each. Satisfaction guaranteed or money refunded. Sample 10 cts. Price list free. M. V. Facey, Preston, Minn.

PERSONAL

CUT THIS OUT QUICK, IF UNMARRIED, and mail it to us within next ten days, with your name and address and we will give you an opportunity to secure two years' membership in the old reliable Sincere Corresponding Club, free of charge, without spending a dollar of your money, which will entitle you to thousands of names and addresses with descriptions of wealthy, refined, handsome, home loving, lady members of our Club, who desire early marriage. Write quick, enclosing some postage for large collection of photos and descriptions of ladies of means desiring marriage. Address Sincere Club, B520, Valley, Nebr.

MEN ON THE DOWN GRADE, WITH Lame Back, Despondency, Failing Memory, Loss of Ambition, unfitting you for work or business. Remember we are specialists in all diseases of men. Book, symptom blank and advice free, sealed. Hinze Medical Institute, 22 Washington Ave. So., Minneapolis, Minn.

4 BOOKS; CHRIST — WOUNDMARKED Anne Cath. Emmerich, and her visions, 'Nativity of Our Lord,' 'Flight Into Egypt,' and "Wedding at Cana," for 20c. Klein Co., Brandon, Minn

MARRY RICH. BE HAPPY AND PROSPERous. Big list of descriptions and photos of congenial people with means free. Sealed, confidential. Either sex. Standard Club, Box 607, Grayslake, Ill.

MARRY—FREE PHOTOS, BEAUTIFUL ladies; descriptions and directory; pay when married. New Plan Co., Dept. 21, Kansas City, Mo.

MARRY—MARRIAGE DIRECTORY WITH photos and description free. Pay when married. The Exchange, Dept. 28, Kansas City, Mo.

YOUNG MAN, WITH GOOD POSITION, wants to get married with honorable girl. Write to T. C. Bakan, Box 53, Hayti, South Dakota.

MEN, IF NERVOUS, WEAK, RUN DOWN, write today for a trial package of Herculin, the wonderful upbuilding tonic. M. Oswald Co., 318 West 42d St., New York

HAVE FRIENDS, SWEETHEARTS EVERYwhere. Receive letters, postcards, mail; membership 10c. Evergreen Club, Reynoldsville, Pa.

OLDEST, LARGEST CLUB, 60,000 MEMbers, free. Mrs. Wrubel, Box 26, Oakland, California.

FUTURE FORETOLD—SEND DIME, BIRTHdate, stamped envelope, three questions. Mrs. Lane, 2018 Howard, Omaha, Nebraska.

GO ON THE STAGE. EXCELLENT CHANCE to travel. Circular free. D. D. Green, Box 213, Mason, Michigan.

MARRY RICH—BE PROSPEROUS AND happy. Write New Home Club, Los [illegible]

MARRIAGE PAPER FREE; BEST PUBlication for sure results, reliable. Eastern [illegible] Bridgeport, Connecticut.

GET MARRIED — BEST MATRIMONIAL paper published. Mailed free. The Correspondent, Toledo, Ohio.

EXCHANGE CARDS, LETTERS, PHOTOS. Big friendship club. Membership 10c. Jolly Card Exchange, Decatur, Indiana.

MATRIMONIALLY INCLINED? DESCRIPtions and addresses sealed. 12c. Henry Mallon, 2250 N. Kostner Ave., Chicago.

LOOK! LOOK! LOOK! MONEY, MONEY, money. Key free. Inquire L. Bryant, 2953 Ellis Ave., Chicago, Ill.

HAVE SWEETHEARTS EVERYWHERE. Receive letters from everyplace. Membership 10c. Hoosier Club, Terre Haute, Indiana.

10,000 LADIES WISH TO CORRESPOND with you. Membership 10c. Curtis Club, Terre Haute, Ind.

lies in the offing a couple of miles. She is there with Goodrich."

"In Heaven's name tell me about this!" demanded Jim. "Why, I thought she perished on the City of Nome. When I got word of it I engaged Captain Crippen, here, and we came down to blow that bandit's cave off the map in revenge."

"And I thought her dead, too, when I found out what happened to the Nome," replied Bainbridge, "and I came here with about the same intentions. I sent Virginia ahead on the Nome, after I had concluded there was something wrong in these waters. My wireless at different times had intercepted fragments of code messages. Translating cryptograms is an old hobby of mine, and while I never could make the whole of the mysterious aerograms out, I translated enough of them to get mighty suspicious. That is why I sent Virginia on ahead, and decided to make some investigations on my next trip down, thinking it would be safer for her on the Nome. Then, when I learned her boat was overdue at Seattle, I became apprehensive, and without waiting for cargo, I pulled anchor and left Nome port. When I reached these waters I picked up another message, and made enough of it out to learn what happened to the City of Nome. I began a systematic campaign. It has taken me a week, and tonight you see the result."

"And you are responsible for that boat's being on the rocks?" put in Captain Crippen.

"Yes, I allow that is a fitting end for the pirates," replied Bainbridge. "Let them perish where they sent so many others to their death. When they found out we had discovered them, they made a dash for their boat, which they had hidden in a cove down the coast. I let them get to sea, and then drove them on the reef."

"But their ship is armed," said Darling

"And so is my motor boat," replied Bainbridge, "and it being a dark night, I, with a craft invisible at five hundred yards, had the best of them."

"And how did you manage to pick up Goodrich and Virginia?" questioned Jim.

"With a squad of picked men I entered the cave, after we had the pirates on the reef. There I found my little girl and her protector. Goodrich smuggled her off the Nome somehow, and has kept her hidden in the cave all the time I haven't had his whole story yet. He stayed behind when Salazar and the others fled, and was going to bring my little girl back to civilization. And, now, Darling, I'm curious to know how you got wind of this affair."

"That's a long story, Captain Bainbridge," Jim replied. "But if you'll take me to the Portland in your boat I'll tell it to you."

An hour later Jim and Sam were in the motor boat cutting thru the waves toward the Portland. The Annabel was steaming back toward Nome. Crippen earned his $25,000 easily, and every member of the crew had his bonus. The Viscount, with Salazar and his arch-murderers, had sunk beneath the waves

On the deck of the Portland Darling wrung Bill Goodrich's hand in silence. Twice Jim had attempted to speak, but his voice choked.

"Jim," Bill managed to say, at length, "go down and see the little girl. She loves you."

The End.

* * *

Ma'm'selle Felice.

(Continued From Page 6.)

ly to be indicted for manslaughter, or worse, if you stick to the stand you've taken?"

"Perfectly well, old top. An indictment never yet killed an innocent man." He laughed. "I've been hankering for an adventure for weeks. It looks as if one was headed my way strong."

"Felice may have something to say about all this, when she hears."

Again Larry Horner laughed. "She? Felice? Not on your life. When she knows what has happened she'll cut and run so fast that it'll take your breath. She never faced an unpleasantness in her life, and she'll tell you so if you ask her. She slides from under." He patted Kirk's arm affectionately. "I'm sorry for you, old top. She's going to give you some heartache, and I warn you if you are really crazy to marry her don't let her out of your sight after she's given the word. Otherwise you'll get a letter declaring the engagement off. That's the way it's usually done. Evidently Baylerot didn't give her time to prepare the screed."

Kirk caught his breath, recalling how Felice had told him of her letter to Clarke Lindsey.

There was a restless movement at the door, then the voice of Detective Linton.

"If you chaps are thru we'll get along."

"All right, officer, I'm your man," replied Larry, and turned again to Kirk.

"Would you mind seeing Lydia and explaining things as well as you can, in order to prepare her for the morning papers?"

"May I tell her the truth?"

"You may as well tell her about the picture. That'll be in the papers, anyway. She'll guess whose it was, I fancy, but if she doesn't, keep it dark. She doesn't approve of Felice, but she understands her and—she's a good bit more generous than I am. So long!"

Larry thrust out his hand.

"So long," replied Kirk, choking over the words. For he was very fond of Larry Horner. As a youngster the boy had worked in his studio, and Kirk had watched his artistic development with the pride of a parent, dreaming big dreams for him as he had once dreamed them for himself

"I'll see Lydia," he murmured. "And afterward I'll dig up a lawyer. You will need counsel."

"Oh, I don't know." Larry smiled one-sidedly. "But do as you see fit." He turned to the officer who had slipped a hand into the crook of his arm. "All ready, sir."

Next week's Ledger will contain further chapters of this interesting story. You will miss a great treat if you do not read it to the end. We will give you constantly the very best stories of entertainment that money will buy, so send in your subscription and take the Ledger regularly, if you are not doing so. You will not regret it.

* * *

Pets.

"I am going to get a pet animal for Robert to play with," remarked the woman with the old-rose sweater. "I think a nice pet instills a love for dumb creatures in a child. I believe I'll get him a St. Bernard puppy. It will have a chance to grow up with Robert and the friendship between them will be beautiful to see. Such a pet may save Robert's life some time. You never can tell. He may be drowning, and Nero—I'll call him that—will jump into the raging current and bring him to shore. Or Herbert may be attacked by bandits in a lonely spot and Nero will give up his life to save him. Such things are happening daily.'

"A pet is good for a child," said the woman in the green-and-white hat. "It gives the little one lots of amusement and exercise pulling the animal around by the tail and tormenting it in other ways. But there is another side to the pet animal question. I have in mind the sad case of my brother.

"His idea was similar to yours. He thought that a nice pet for Wilfred would teach him to respect our dumb friends. And it did. One night my brother brought home a mastiff puppy In a few months the puppy had grown to the size of a calf, and things began to happen. Whenever Wilfred was naughty and deserved punishment his father would tell him to repair to the back room. Wilfred, who was wise for his years, would bring the dog with him. If my brother dared raise a hand to Wilfred, the dog would growl, show his teeth, and threaten to annihilate him.

"Wilfred could do as he pleased while the dog was around. They got to be the terror of the neighborhood. One day Wilfred batted a ball thru a neighbor's window, and the man of the house came out, grabbed Wilfred by the collar, and was going to turn him over to a passing policeman. Ponto was looking down the street, but as soon as Wilfred whistled he turned and, seeing the predicament his little master was in, went for the man and the officer. He pushed the man over with one lunge and chased the policeman down the street. Wilfred went home then and sneaked into bed, after tying Ponto outside the door of his room to stand guard. To get at Wilfred and chastise him that night his father had to chloroform Ponto and put him to sleep for an hour.

"They sold the dog while Wilfred was at Sunday school—the only place to which they didn't go together—and my brother bought a pet donkey. The donkey took the place of the dog in the child's heart and did as much damage later on. My brother was standing behind the donkey brushing out his long tail, when he saw Wilfred coming with an apple and a lump of sugar. The donkey was so tickled that he let his heels fly, knocking Wilfred's papa up against the barn. He was in bed for a week.

"So if you want a sane pet for a child get him a goldfish or a canary. Safety first!"

* * *

All Satisfied.

A very angry client entered a New York lawyer's office. He had called upon a debtor and asked him politely to pay a bill of $2.50, and had been abused for his pains. Now he wanted the lawyer to collect it.

The lawyer demurred The bill was so small that it would cost the whole amount to collect it.

"No matter," said the angry one. "I don't care if I don't get a cent as long as that fellow has to pay it."

So the lawyer wrote the debtor a letter, and in a day or two the latter appeared in high dudgeon. He did not owe any $2.50, and he would not pay

"Very well," said the lawyer; "then my instructions are to sue But I should hardly think it would pay you to stand a suit for so small a sum

"Who will get the money if I pay it?" asked the man

The lawyer was obliged to confess that he would.

"Very well," said the debtor; "that's another matter. If Smith isn't going to get it I am perfectly willing to pay it."

* * *

A Spruce Tree.

Six-year-old Elsie teased her mother unresistingly for a chew of gum before they went into the theater, but, explaining that it was impolite to chew in public, her mother refused to give it to her

Little Elsie did not forget the gum, however, for when the show was over she said:

"Mamma, where does gum come from?"

"From a tree, Elsie," replied her mother.

"What kind of a tree, mamma?"

"Why, a spruce tree, my dear."

"Well, the seat I sat in must have been made of a spruce tree, 'cause I dug a nice big chew of gum off the bottom of it."—Judge.

To Women Who Dread Motherhood

Hundreds of women have proven by experience that dread and fear are unnecessary. Pain can now be reduced to almost nothing by discoveries of Dr. J. H. Dye, life-long specialist in such cases. Book explaining fully how to bring strong, healthy children into the world with almost no pain, sent free in plain wrapper and postpaid to any woman who will send her name to Dr. J. H. Dye Medical Institute, 52 Lincoln Bldg., Buffalo, N. Y. Write for it today.

LADIES, $1000! I positively guarantee my great Successful "Compound." Safely relieves some of the longest, most obstinate abnormal affect ons in 3 to 5 days No harm, pain or interference with work Mail $1.50 Double Strength, $2.00 BOOKLET FREE. Write today Dr. C. L. Southington Remedy Co., 515 Main St., Kansas City, Mo.

10 Beautiful Gifts for Boys and Girls For selling 25 "Lady Quality" Packages, giving 30c value and coupon worth 75c for only 10c. We trust you. Write for my outfit and Premium list M. C. RICHARDSON, 4715 Indiana Ave., CHICAGO

LEG SORES
Healed by ANTI-FLAMMA Poultice Plaster. Stops the itching around sores. Heals while you work. DESCRIBE CASE and get FREE SAMPLE. Bayles Distributing Co., 1800 Grand, Kansas City, Mo.

DROPSY Treated One Week Free. Short breathing relieved in a few hours; swelling and water reduced in a few days; regulates liver, kidneys, and heart. Write for Free Trial Treatment. Collum Dropsy Remedy Co., Dept. 6, Atlanta, Ga.

"ROUGH ON RATS" ends RATS, MICE, Bugs, Don't Die in the House. Unbeatable Exterminator. The Recognized Standard Exterminator at Drug & Country Stores. Economy Size 25c. or 15c. Used the World Over. Used by U. S. Gov't. Rough on Rats Never Fails. Refuse ALL Substitutes.

ASTHMA & HAY FEVER Treatment sent by express to you on Free Trial. If it cures send $1; if not, don't. Give express office. Write today. [illegible] STEELINE, 836 Ohio Ave., Sidney, Ohio

PARALYSIS Book Free Write For It
You Will Want It, If Paralyzed.
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FAT Reduce your weight by a simple method. Full Particulars, etc., mailed FREE in a sealed package to any address HallChem.Co., Dept. A15. St. Louis, Mo.

CARDS Dice, Magic Goods, Novelties. Catalog Free. B. L. SMYTHE CO., NEWARK, MO.

FRECKLES Positively Removed by Berry's Freckle Ointment by mail 50c. Booklet Free Dr. C. H. Berry, 2975 Mich. Ave. Chicago

DICE AND CARDS all kinds. Catalog free M. B. Hill, Swanton, O.

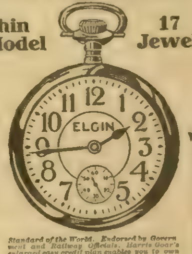
WETO GRAPH SECRET WRITING SYSTEM
Invaluable for lovers and for keeping recipes, addresses, secret memorandum or other information safe and private. No stranger can read your postals if you use the Weto Graph. Great fun for lovers or friends. Don't miss it. Send 10c and we will send the Weto Graph by mail, with full instructions. Address PENN PUBLISHING CO., Parnassus, Pa.

The Sanitary Aluminum Tea and Coffee Strainer

Being made in a solid piece it has no joints to catch dirt, contagious germs or to retain greasy substances. The metal of which it is constructed prohibits rust, and although far lighter, it will outlast the best wire strainer.
Price 15 cents. W. C. WATKINS, Parnassus, Pa.

SPECIAL
Would You Accept This 30 Day Offer?

Thin Model 17 Jewel



Standard of the World. Endorsed by Government and Railway Officials. Harris Goar's enlarged easy credit plan enables you to own this superb Elgin Watch now.

17-JEWEL ELGIN $12.50

Now, during this Special Sale, is the time to save a third to a half on this high grade Elgin. Thoroughly factory tested, guaranteed 25 years, engraved or plain polished case, with your own monogram, and our advertising offer is to send you this fine 17 Jewel Elgin at this ridiculously low price, free of charge for your inspection and approval and if you want to keep it, you pay the small, easy terms of

No Money DOWN $2 —A— Month

We do this because we want to prove to you that the great volume of our business actually enables us to do better by you than any other watch or diamond house in the world and that on this particular watch, we save you nearly half, for it sells regularly at $20.00 to $22.00.

We Don't Want You To Send One Cent— Not a penny. Merely give us your full name and address that we may send you this superb 17-Jewel Elgin on approval. [illegible]

3 Fine Books FREE!

HARRIS-GOAR
KANSAS CITY MO

Mr. Harris wants to send you his three latest Books, [illegible] both at home and abroad; the other, the [illegible] of "The Diamond," [illegible] Write today—Do it now!

HARRIS-GOAR CO.
Dept. 1891 KANSAS CITY, MO.
The House that Sells More Elgin Watches than Any Other Firm in the World.

FREE!

Yes This $15 Complete Working Outfit absolutely free. It does not cost a penny. Write today for my great offer.

Draw $150 to $300 a Month
Companies are calling for men to fill positions paying from $150.00 to $300.00 a month. I will give you just the training you need to hold one of the big jobs—right in your own home I am Chief Draftsman of a large and well known company
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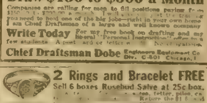
Chief Draftsman Dobe Engineers Equipment Co Div. C-801 Chicago, Ill.

2 Rings and Bracelet FREE
Sell 6 boxes Rosebud Salve at 25c box. [illegible]



Rosebud Perfume Co., Box 305, Woodsboro, Md.

LADIES [illegible] free catalogue describing the Bee Cell Supporter A Boon to Women [illegible] Made of pure soft rubber [illegible]

This Handsome $25 Blue Serge Suit $15
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Chicago Ledger

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COPIES WEEKLY.

GENTLE JABS.

Men never get too busy to grow old.

A few men work too hard and a lot of men rest too much.

No girl appreciates a lover who is unable to hold his own.

On with the dance! The old hen is now engaged for every set.

Don't forget to pull down the blinds if you live in a glass house.

Present a small boy with a watch and he'll have the time of his life.

Few women show discretion in the selection of things to be left unsaid.

Never judge the dimensions of a woman's brain by the size of her hat.

Solomon was the wisest man of his day, yet he was hopelessly married.

It takes a clever woman to obtain information without asking questions.

There is nothing so likely to make a man economize as the lack of money.

Some men are of no more importance than a thermometer on a pleasant day.

A spinster says she loves cats because they are just as treacherous as men.

There are times when the almighty dollar will purchase less than politeness.

A man will invariably smile at your jokes if invited to "smile" at your expense.

Most men would be satisfied to do nothing if they could get paid for doing it.

When a woman marries she not only takes the man's name but everything else he has.

Half the world doesn't stop to consider that it is none of its business how the other half lives.

A pig has as much use for a tail as a man has for the two buttons on the back of his frock coat

There would be no objection to boys being boys if they would only be men after they get to be men.

No matter how great a philosopher a man may be, he can't figure out how he happened to get married.

When a mother tells a bachelor about the cute thing her baby did, he never says just what he thinks.

A man's wife usually figures among the things he classifies as circumstances over which he has no control.

Sometimes it is so hard for a father to give his daughter in marriage that he gets discouraged in trying.

Nothing is calculated to jar a pretty girl like the masculine attentions bestowed upon another girl who is homely.

Home and Health

FASHION NOTES.

Any sleeve is right as long as it's not plain.

The yoke has disappeared from skirt fashions

One-piece frocks have capes that hang to the waist.

Poplin in bright colors is a favorite for sport coats.

A great many dresses are finished at the throat with a square neck.

Hand-painted leghorn hats are covered with chiffon or point d'esprit to soften the coloring.

Collars have grown a bit shorter over the shoulders and a bit longer down the back; in fact, they are something like sailor collars, but just enough different to be new.

The girl who can braid cleverly and neatly will have ample work to do, for the garments of milady of fashion are to be braided or embroidered over many an inch at the juncture of different materials and for bands and ornamentation in general.

There is a new sort of sport middy this year. It is the Russian sport blouse, a cousin of last season's smock, but a much daintier affair. It slips on over the head and is belted at the waist line, the part that falls over the hips having slashes at either side like a man's shirt. Sometimes there is smocking at the shoulders; or the fullness may be added by box pleats. The deep collar tapers in front to a long slash which is closed over a buttoned flap.

FOR THE HOUSEWIFE.

A piece of cloth dipped in spirits of wine and rubbed upon soiled leather will remove every spot on it.

For soiled matting dissolve some oxalic acid in water and apply with a scrubbing brush. Wash afterwards with clean water.

If lemons are old and dry, place them in a pan of hot water and keep the water at an even temperature for a few hours. As a result the lemons will become fresh and juicy again.

To remove ink stains from wash materials pour a tablespoonful of kerosene on them and rub well. Then rinse in kerosene and the spots will disappear as if by magic. This should be done before the regulation washing.

Before using table oilcloth paste at each corner on the wrong side a square of cotton material. This will prevent the unsightly cracking of the corners which so often comes long before the body of the cloth shows any signs of wear.

Epsom salts have been found by many to be excellent for setting the color of a delicate fabric. Just add a teaspoonful to each gallon of water, and your garments, even those made of serge and other woolen materials, will wash easily without losing their color.

NEEDLEWORK NOTES.

The woman who does not crochet can fashion yokes for nightgowns or camisoles from lengths of lace sewed together. Various kinds of laces can be combined in this way.

The dainty cross-stitch borders are attractive on small guest towels. Worked in shades of yellow, with green or pale blue, or in two shades of green, the result is admirable. Many women select a material that has a block pattern and count the pattern out on this instead of using canvas.

A most attractive scarf for the bungalow or the veranda is made of craftsman's canvas darned with raffia. Indian designs in baskets or rugs can be copied and applied with stunning results for scarfs of this sort. The colors of the Indian patterns, which are so soft in tone, can be carried out with good effect in the colored raffia

HEALTH NOTES.

The teeth should be thoroly cleansed after each meal and at night before retiring. In addition to this your gums and the sockets of your teeth must be kept stimulated. You can do this by brushing the gums, using a stiff brush and a rotary motion.

A hot foot bath before going to bed is efficacious in promoting sleep, as it withdraws the blood pressure from the head to the feet. The water should be as hot as you can stand it and it should cover the ankles. Keep your feet in the water for about ten or fifteen minutes. A feeling of relief should be almost instantaneous, and sleep a comparatively easy matter.

Summertime is the time to give the hair an (h)airing. Loosen it; run the fingers thru it; let it hang loose for some time each day. Hair is a delicate growth with its roots in the scalp, which must be kept in good condition. Use castor oil tonic if your hair is dry, and rub it in gently at the roots several times a week.

BEAUTY HINTS.

A well-arched eyebrow adds a finish to the countenance that is unattainable in any other way. The most beautiful eye will fail to impress if the arch above is poorly formed or too light in coloring. I think the woman fortunate enough to possess an arched eyebrow which is neither too narrow nor too wide should count herself one of nature's favorites. They are a mark of beauty.

As I have watched many women I have been impressed with the astounding fact that most of us have homely eyebrows. It is all the more astounding for the reason that the proper treatment will do what nature failed to do, and that the proper treatment is so simple and takes such little effort.

To make the hair grow along the line the eyebrow should follow some hair-growing ointment should be well massaged into the skin every night. Vaseline is one of the simplest and most effective ointments. Use the ends of the fingers for the massage, taking great care not to get the vaseline on the parts of the forehead where hair is not wanted. If the fingers fail to keep the vaseline within the confined space a brush of camel's-hair is useful and a good substitute. If the vaseline is applied regularly and with enough friction in a short time little hairs will begin to appear and a well-arched eyebrow will develop.

The care of the eyebrows varies with the kind of eyebrows you have. Some eyebrows are stiff and long, others stiff and short; some grow upward, others downward; some are too thick, others too thin; some are too fair in coloring. Each kind needs a special treatment to make it appear well-groomed.

HEMS IN DAMASK.

Every woman who has ever attempted to lay hems on napkins or tablecloths or to hem them after they are laid knows the impossibility of doing them quickly or well if the stiffening is not first removed. One way to get them in proper condition is to rub the linen between the fingers and thumbs along the entire length of the hem. This gets out the stiffness and prevents needles from breaking. Another and better method is before the linen, napkins particularly, is cut apart, wet it along the line of division and for about an inch on each side with a small toothbrush dipped in soapsuds. Not only will the thread draw with few, if any, breaks, but the hem can be laid with much greater ease. Never attempt to cut linen by the eye. It takes little more time to draw a thread, and that is easily made up by the quickness and accuracy with which the hem is laid.

* * *

How It Happened.

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Second Woman—"No such thing! Your Willie came over where my Johnny was and took 'em."

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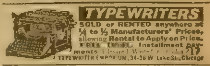

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Eck Lowrey's Luck

Or, In Quest of Douglas Beechmere

By I. M. Shepler

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CHAPTER I.

THE WRONG BOY.

ALEXANDER LOWREY, commonly called Eck for short, faced his grandfather. Truth was in his eyes, resentment choking at his heart. Elder Lowrey's manner was stern.

"No sir, no matter what old Smith tells, I——" began Eck.

"Mr. Smith," corrected his grandfather.

"Well, Mr. Smith, then, no difference what he tells on me, honest, grandfather, I never helped make that disturbance in front of the church, tho Mr. Smith's nephew, Del Smith, did, as Jim——" Eck stopped short.

"Elder" Lowrey, as most people spoke of him, interrupted still more sternly.

"You seem to have a good idea who made the disturbance at the church, which argues that you were there. I have striven to raise you boys to be respectful, and now I am called upon to pay a fine for your disturbance of a meeting in a church. Anything but that, Alex." There was now more than a stern tinge in the tone of the Elder, and the something more hurt Eck sorely.

"Janitor Smith declares that you came into the meeting, where Donald McComb waited to accompany his mother home after the meeting was over. Says you rushed in—knows it was you by that light cap you wear—and grabbing Donald by the head and neck, literally dragged him out of the church. Hit him two or three times, then dropped him on the church steps and ran. Mr. Smith bears a truthful name. I must believe him.

"He further says the boys on the commons back of the church have long been disturbing the night services by their rioting there. He expects this time to make an example they will fear in future. He says he has long known of this feud between town and country boys, and Donald leads the town boys, while you lead the country boys."

Eck's smile was wan, as he hastily answered:

"We have nothing to do with the small boys on the commons, and Don never went into the church to escort his mother home from that women's meeting. He had hidden our roast chickens, and we were close on him. He knew he'd have to tell where, or we'd lock him where he'd not get out until he did tell. I was right behind him, and Del Smith was coming in front of him. The church was the only place he could dodge into to save one or the other from getting him, and in Don went. I never thought he'd 'a played the baby act that way."

While Eck was saying this, he was gazing into a face visible by means of a looking glass in the next room. This was his brother Jim, older by a year and a half than himself, as tall but not so strongly built as Eck. The face bore a half-mocking expression, a "I-dare-you-tell" look. Jim Lowrey had from the first dominated his brothers by an insisted-upon disdain for the "tattle-tale." He was dominating Eck now.

"My cap did go into the church, but it was on the head of Del Smith. Del picked up my cap by mistake, when we started; I went bareheaded. Del is so stupid and easily influenced," and Eck gave the face in the glass a warning stare. "He would not have gone in after Don unless a bystander dared him to. Poor Del! Somebody gave him a duck last fall, and he had fed and saved it all winter in anticipation of offering it up at some sugar-makig 'chicken friz.' He was mad about Don taking his duck. Janitor Smith must pay Del's fine, for Del's father is never there with money for anything."

"How does it happen that your brother Jim has always kept out of these disgraceful riots you boys get into?" again the old man sternly questioned.

Eck flushed and bit his lips. This was the time he had resolved to tell on Jim. That morning, when the constable of the little village two miles away had come apprising Grandfather Lowrey that he must appear before the Squire that afternoon with these two boys, Eck had determined to tell his grandfather of Jim's share in this trouble. His grandfather thought Jim honorable in all things. Until now Eck Lowrey could not understand why his brother Jim could so easily pull the wool over his grandfather's eyes, for Elder Lowrey was considered shrewd and far-seeing into men's affairs as well as into men themselves.

"It's because Jim's just a boy yet, I reckon," Eck would sometimes argue to himself. "Grandfather began by thinking he was an angel, and crafty Jim soon learned how to make him still think it. It's Jim who puts it into grandfather's head that I'm the scapegrace of the family, always."

Never until now had their boyish games and pranks touched upon any phase of game or trick that might set the law after them. That this last trouble between town and country boys had thus resulted was secretly worrying Eck Lowrey, and he could easily guess his grandfather's shame and anxiety, and the dread of what his world would think of him, to say nothing of the blame to come to him from some of his older children, who resented the love and interest he showed for the four orphaned sons of their youngest brother, David.

It was David who, when all of his brothers and sisters left the old home and their bereaved father to his loneliness, remained and cast his fortunes with those of his parent. It was here that he brought his first wife, and here, when she died leaving three sons, James, Alexander and Ralph, that David brought his second wife. This woman, good-natured, even and placid of temper, and an excellent housekeeper, gave her three stepsons a mother's love and care, and little trouble had they ever made her, especially Eck and Ralph. The boys called her Stepmother Susie, while her own boy, Willie, called her Mother Susie.

That, after the death of her husband, Stepmother Susie was best pleased to remain in the Lowrey home, taking care of these boys and the old man's household affairs, angered some of his older children. They argued that he should have sent Stepmother Susie and her boy home to her people, have put the three older boys in an orphan's home, sold or rented his farm, and lived among his older children.

To all such suggestions, Elder Lowrey uttered a stern "no." He would never go outside his own home to live. He would never turn away Susie or these children.

Eck was thinking of how his Aunt Martha and Uncle Sampson would gloat over this trouble come to his grandfather this morning. They would reiterate: "We told you it would come to pass just as it has. We knew you were pampering those boys in a way to bring shame upon your gray head."

No wonder Eck was sending black looks into the other room at his brother Jim. Jim was to blame for all this.

At this juncture Elder Lowrey was turning to a big boy seated far back in the room. Sternly he ordered:

"Ralph, I will now hear your story. Were you near the church?"

Ralph glanced up, and shifted his bulky body, crossing and recrossing his feet and clearing his throat before he spoke, for Ralph was the quiet one of the Lowrey boys. He was nearly 15, a year younger than Eck, but as large, tho his growth was as yet loose and bulky, while Eck had carried solidity of muscle and breadth of shoulder compatible with his height up with him.

"I was not near the church, but I have Eck's word for it that——" a sniff from the next room stopped his slow beginning, and Elder Lowrey put in a little sharply: "Tell your own story. I have had your brother Alex's story of the church disturbance. What was the start of the trouble?"

"Well, sir," Ralph went on deliberately, "you know we had a 'chicken friz' over at the Donnelly sugar camp——"

"I knew you asked to go to a stirring off of sugar at the camp last night, but a 'chicken friz,' no. Where did you get your chickens? Steal them?" interrupted his grandfather.

"No, sir; you know that Eck, as the head of our gang, allows nothing of that sort." Again that sniff from the next room, passing the Elder's dulled ears, but setting the fire in Eck's eyes. "Stepmother Susie gave me a hen, Burton brought another. Simp brought one, and Del Smith brought a duck he tended and saved a-purpose for a sugar-time chicken supper. Willie begged to go along with us, and promised he wouldn't eat enough to make him have sick headache today," he continued, with a glance at a long, slim and pale-faced boy crouched back of the big wood stove. The youngster's cheeks flushed. He was not more than 11, and the sickly half-brother of the three older boys.

"Never you mind, Willie; you were not to blame. You did just what any one of us would have done, sure." It was Eck speaking, and Willie sent him a grateful look.

Ralph jammed his hands into his pockets, and took up his slow story: "Eck brought the eggs and potatoes to roast, and Stepmother Susie gave Willie a bag of doughnuts, and we had enough for a big feast, and we had the fowls fixed and in the coals baking when we heard Donnelly's old coon dog barking up a tree. Somebody had whistled him away from the camp, for I heard the whistle plain. You know how crazy Donnelly is over coon hunting? He took out and ran to the noise, and the rest of us followed him, some with torches.

"We left Willie behind to look after the kettles for just a minute, but when Willie heard us hollerin' he ran a little ways out in the woods to find what the fun was, for it was no coon. It was only our old yellow cat up a sapling. Now, it is easy to guess who carried Yaller out there, and, after whistling to Tige, let him see her run up that tree, purpose to get us away from the camp, and let in that town gang, headed by Don McComb. It's very plain, for that's Jim's idea of fun. Makes no difference which side. He told that town gang about our 'friz.' I know you don't believe James will do such things, but he will. He gets his story in first with you, and you always believe him, and everything that Eck tries to do right in, he is a hoodoo. He gets the blame, sir. One of the gang I caught got Jim's part in last night's work choked out of him, tho I guessed it beforehand, for I heard him calling the cat as we left home."

"You are forgetting your story, sir. That boy might have told you anything he thought you wanted to know to get out of being hurt," was the still very stern return.

"There isn't much else to the story, sir. Before Willie had gone ten steps from the camp Don and his gang rushed in, grabbed up the chickens and duck in some cloths they'd brought along, and made off. Willie could see it was Don. He gave the alarm, and we went after them, clear into the town."

"And the church," but now, somehow, the Elder's tone was weakening. According to his creed he was trying to bring up those boys in its tenets of right and morality, which meant in a stern, strict manner, but deep down in his heart he loved them and wanted to believe in their honor.

"No, not the church, sir. That was Don's trick. Eck's our fastest runner, and Don's the town's fastest, but Eck, I know, just about had him, tho it was mean for Don to do it. You see, Don and his gang had a nice lot of melons stolen last fall from one of their rendevous meetings. They laid it on to our gang. It wasn't us, for, if it had been, Eck would have made us tote them back next day. We think it was that gang of river boys took them. No matter. We got the blame, and paid for it in full last night, tho it's all Jim's fault. If he'd keep his deceitful nib out of our affairs——"

That instant Jim stepped into the room, asking in a bland tone, common with him where his grandfather was concerned:

"Hadn't I better go to the spring plowing, grandfather? My team is harnessed ready."

"Certainly," was the answer. "I judge that you are not in this. If you are, it will come out in the trial this afternoon," and grandfather ended with a groan.

Later Eck remarked to Ralph: "You see it's no use for us to tell him how

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Jim plays the gangs against each other. If Donald fails to really know who it was dragged him out and pommeled him—and he might, for the church was dark at the back where he sat—and if Del is afraid to tell because his uncle will raise the nation with him if he does, can't you see where it puts me? I feel sorrier, tho, for grandfather than myself. As Clark Beechmare says: 'There's some of us born always to end in trouble.' I'm one of them."

Ralph could only look in a helpless way upon his favorite brother, finding no words with which to express himself.

CHAPTER II.

BEFORE THE SQUIRE.

DONALD McCOMB, son of the minister of the church in which the episode of the night terminated, sat this morning listlessly kicking his heels on the grate fender of the parsonage sitting-room; he was trying to study.

Don was of Eck Lowrey's age, but smaller. For all this he was alert and wiry, and able to hold his own with the best of his age in athletic sports.

Don's mind was not on the study he was trying out this morning. It was constantly harking back to his last night's work, and as he rumpled his mop of curly hair, he wondered what had possessed him to do the deceitful thing of which he was guilty. Not the running away with the meat for that "friz," but allowing his mother to think he had come to escort her home from the W. C. T. U. prayer meeting, and then involuntarily showing the white feather by evading Eck in the church.

He had done this thing on an impulse he could not explain, and the surprise of the big Smith boy's following him and laying rough hands on him in the church had caused him to do another impulsive thing, to resist long enough to make a loud scuffling in that quiet place. Second thought came in an instant, tho, and he had allowed Del to drag him out with less noise.

The janitor, at the noise, hurried back in time to see part of the scuffle, but in the poorly lighted portico of the church made a wrong guess at the chief perpetrator.

Janitor Smith was gusty-tempered. Young people irritated him on small provocation. As Donald straightened up from the jolt the big Del had given him—because he did not, after the first moment, attempt to help himself—the janitor asked: "Hurt much?"

"Naw; I will wait outside for mother. I see the meeting is over." He really wanted time to get his breath. Some of the members nearest the door had heard a scuffling noise, others farther up had not.

Janitor Smith merely told these that "They would soon know."

The town gang, after looting the campfire, had made off with their booty in the direction of the town, running in a pack like hounds, the country gang coming yelping back of them. As they turned a corner, Del called:

"Separate! Those carrying the booty hide it in that woodshed to the right." The gang obeyed the leader.

After walking home with his mother, the way leading near that woodshed, Donald excused himself, and set out now at hot speed to the shed.

Others of his gang were ahead of him. They declared the roast stuff all gone—not even a smell of it left. Donald looked serious.

"Well, this does beat the band, boys!" he ejaculated at last. "I know none of you got it. Do you suppose Eck or some of his gang guessed where we put it? We've been seen. That's sure." Then Don tried to comfort himself by adding: "If they lose their 'friz,' why, so did we lose our melons on ice thru them."

Next morning this was no comfort after word was brought Donald by one of his trusties that one of the river boys—a bad lot living in cabins and shanties on the river bottoms near the town—scouting about to find what he could find, from a hiding-spot had noticed the boys dodge into that woodshed, and followed as soon as they left it. So again the river gang came out ahead on a feast.

URIC ACID POISONING!

The most eminent physicians recognize that uric acid stored up in the system is the cause of rheumatism, that this uric acid poison is present in the joints, muscles, or nerves. By experimenting and analysis at the Invalids' Hotel and Surgical Institute in Buffalo, N. Y., Dr. Pierce discovered a combination of native remedies that he called "Anuric"—which drives out the uric acid from the system, and in this way the pain, swelling and inflammation subside. If you are a sufferer from rheumatism, backache, pains here or there, you can obtain "Anuric" at any drug store and get relief from the pains and ills brought about by uric acid; or send Dr. Pierce 10c. for trial package "Anuric"—many times more potent than lithia and eliminates uric acid as hot water melts sugar. A short trial will convince you.

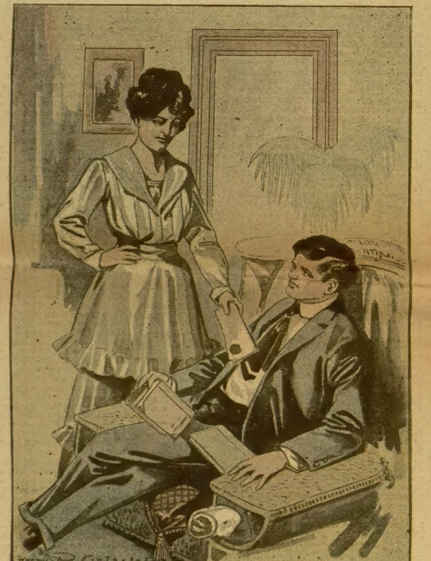
As Donald pondered, his mother came into the room bearing a piece of paper. She looked worried, too, and spoke in a low tone, as if fearing she might be heard.

"Donald, the constable brought an order for you to appear before the Squire's court this afternoon as witness to a church disturbance last night, Eck Lowrey defendant. What does it mean? I begged him to let me bring it in to you."

"Mean?" Donald's face flushed. "That I'm the whitest-livered cad in town. What business had I taking refuge in a church—as criminals of old did? I might have known that Jim Lowrey would send Lubber Smith in after me. I can't understand what Eck Lowrey has to do with this. Eck was not in the church." Then Don frankly confessed the whole plot to his mother.

"I suppose I must tell your father all this. I can understand your high spirits, your love for fun of this kind. He cannot. What will people say, Donald, and you a minister's son?"

"What they always do, mother, that preachers' sons are a wild lot. But I will do my own confessing to father. Everything was so still in the church, I thought you had dismissed and gone home. I am quite sure I would not have gone in had I heard any noise—that is, I think so. I can't always be sure of myself in an emergency like that. If they fine Del, I will pay his fine with that money I saved up clerking on Saturdays and at night."



"What does it mean?"

Mrs. McComb merely replied: "That will be all right. Then I want you to stop this town and country feud. You are getting so large; next thing you will be developing real hate instead of mere fun, and 'who gets the best of it last?' You understand this to be final from me?"

"Yes, ma'am, I understand. I'm ready to run up the white flag."

Promptly at one o'clock, Eck drove out the old carriage that was to take his grandfather, Ralph and himself into town. Eck's blueness was turning bluer. Grandfather Lowrey's troubled look was getting in due effect with increasing force. Eck was simply miserable.

He felt like a criminal as they drove thru the town and nearly to its end before pulling up at the Squire's office. He was sure that everybody in town knew what they were there for. So was Elder Lowrey.

The minister was on hand with Donald. His face was drawn and serious. He never had been able to reconcile himself to the thought that his boy's exuberance of spirit was exactly a good thing. Still, he had hope. Don was truthful, he was openly frank, and he was ever willing to confess himself in the wrong or mistaken when he was both.

As Elder Lowrey and his two grandsons came in, Del Smith slipped into the office by way of a back door and sidled down on a chair, looking frightened. The minister had Del subpoenaed at the last minute. Janitor Smith, Del's uncle, opened his eyes wide at this proceeding.

Two or three times, as the Squire opened court and stated the case to be tried, Del twisted about on his chair, as tho making ready to skip. At last his movements became so obvious that Donald, forgetting all rules of court—if he knew any—called out briskly:

"Stay just where you are, Delbert Smith. You know who waltzed me out last night. It was you, not Alex Lowrey. So 'fess up, and let me pay your fine, for I was all to blame. I had no business to tempt you in there."

And now ensued another interruption. Convinced that the face of his nephew showed guilt, Janitor Smith began to question him, tho the Squire repeatedly called order.

When the janitor was convinced from his nephew's own mouth that he was the guilty party, he hurriedly withdrew his charge, and wanted the matter immediately dropped and hushed. At this juncture Del invited Donald out back of the office, where he declared he would whale the ground with him for stealing his duck.

The Squire was quite willing to do as Smith suggested, charging only for the constable's fees. This Donald settled then and there.

The Squire then suggested that all present go out that night to Donnelly's sugar camp, and have the "friz" all over, each fellow taking along a chicken or something its equal.

The minister declared he could not possibly be present, as a previous engagement interfered; but he would furnish Del with a fat goose and Donald with a chicken. Elder Lowrey made a similar excuse, but agreed to furnish several chickens, enough so that the country gang could invite in the town gang, and then and there he wanted them to settle all differences and be friends.

As Eck and Ralph unhitched the horses from the carriage, Eck spied Jim grinning down at him from the barn loft.

"You might have grinned from the other side of your mouth," he coldly remarked, "if Del had told those men that you even hired him to go into the church and throw a scene. Del kept that on you, tho he informed some of us that you were the scab that sent word to that low-down river gang where to find the stuff Don's gang hid. If that's true your name's Dennis with some folks that you'd like to stand high and dry with."

Eck could see by the change in Jim's countenance that Del had been merely wildly guessing. He was glad it was but a guess, for all it had seemed unjust that his brother could stand quietly by and hear him accused of doing something he had not done.

"You tell Del Smith if I catch him telling that again I'll crack his head on his heels!" he called down.

"Do your own telling!" called up Eck.

This capital story will be continued in the next issue of the Ledger. During the coming months many great stories will appear in these columns. If you are not already a subscriber for this paper, it will repay you to send in a year's subscription. It costs you only $1.00, and you will never regret it. Let us hear from you at once.

* * *

Desperate.

"A man is liable to do something desperate when the woman he loves turns him down," observed the boarder who frequents the movies.

"A man usually does something to spite the girl," said the landlady's daughter.

"No," returned the movie boarder, "he does something to show that he doesn't care what becomes of him."

"I once knew a man," said the intelligent boarder, "who felt so bad when his girl turned him down that he grew side whiskers!"

The boarders shivered.

"They were red side whiskers," continued the intelligent boarder.

"Don't they call them 'sideboards' or something?" asked the youthful boarder.

"Sideburns," corrected the intelligent boarder.

"No, burnsides," insisted the professor.

"Those names apply only to fiery side whiskers," observed the innocent youth.

"Neither name does justice to the species," observed Mr. Stews.

"How far do you think any name could go toward the accomplishment of justice in this particular case?" asked the intelligent boarder.

"But, good gracious!" ejaculated the landlady. "If the young men who board here should resort to such desperate measures how terrible it would be! I'm sure every last one of you has been turned down by a young lady of my acquaintance at least once in the last few months——"

The pretty teacher and all the boarders were terribly nervous over this remark. But the landlady went right along.

"I hate to think," she said, "how it would look to sit at the head of this table and see fourteen sets, or pairs, of sideburns or burnsides, some red, some black and some gray!"

"And some blue," put in the pink-cheeked young man, who knew very well that any kind of facial adornment in his case was impossible.

"It was one of the King Georges who drove whiskers out of England," said the pretty teacher. "He had no beard and that's how the smooth face style originated."

"Gee whiz," observed the pessimistic boarder. "If Hughes gets elected the wearing of spinach may become as prevalent as smooth faces are now."

"It would save a lot of time and money," murmured the boarder who is in arrears.

* * *

Common Type.

"I don't believe I have ever known a more consistent optimist than Dubwaite."

"Well, Dubwaite is like a lot of other optimists."

"How is that?"

"He doesn't care how much he worries his friends and relatives, just so he doesn't put himself out."

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Illustration below shows you exactly how to play the game. All you have to do is to look each picture over, and then go thru the Catalog of Titles and select the title you think best fits it. Below we show one of the pages taken from the Catalog and Reply Book, also an object lesson picture. It's very easy to find the best titles to the pictures. You start right now. All back pictures free with the Catalog of Titles and Reply Book in which to write down your answers.

CATALOG OF TITLES

R

Race, The.
Racing.
Ragin' Elements.
Railway Train.
Rather Effeminate.
Real Class.
Realism.
Real Punch.
Real Spenders.
Reasons.
Rebellion.
Recipe.
Reciprocity.
Recklessness.
Record of Profits.
Reduced to Extremities.
Reminded.
Reminiscences.
Repartee.
Rest Cure.
Restraint of Trade.
Revenge!
Reverse Irish.
Revised Ceremony.
Revised to Date.
Rewards of Virtue.
Richesse Oblige.
Right at Home.
Righteous Anger.
Righteous Wrath.
Right In Line.
Ring Methods.
Risen.
Running Conversation.
Rural Finance.
Rural Standard.

S

Sacrilege.
Sad Case.
Safe.
Safety First.
Sailing.
Sailor on the Boat.
Salvage.
Same as of Yore.
Same Brand.
Same Thing.
Same View.
Same Walk.
Sauce for the Goose.
Saving Him Steps.
Scale of Values.
Scant.
Scared.
Science of Deduction.
Sensitive Patriot.
Sentence Suspended.
Settled.
Severe Test.
She Did Not.
She Knew Her Business.
She Knew Him.
Shell Game.
She Would Never Rise.
Sidestepping.
Signed Up.
Sign of the Dollar.
Silver Lining.
Skating.
Slumber Cua.
Social Callers.
Social Equals.
Socially Impossible.
Society Child.
Society Reckoning.
So It Seems.
Some Ceremony.
Some Difference.
Some Job.
Some Moving.
Some Spender.
Something Coming, Sure.
Some Vastness.
Sophisticated.
Sore Spot.
Special Occasion.
Spoils of Victory.
Sporting Spirit.
Sports of Winter.
Sporty Place.

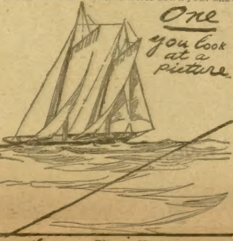
Two you find a title in the Catalog that fits the picture

Stab in the Back.
Sticklers.
Still Better.
Still Higher Finance.
Still Sore.
Stop Order.
Storm Center.
Stormy Trip.
Strategy.
Strides.
Student of Millinery.
Stumped!
Subject To Withdrawal.
Subtle Flattery.
Such a Shock!
Such Is Fame.
Sufficient.
Supremely Happy.
Sure Death.
Sure Enough.
Sure For Once.
Sure Thing.
Sure Winner.
Surface Indications.
Swelled.
Sympathy.
System.

T

Tabloid Novel.
Technical Advice.
Temporary.
Temporary Reverse.
That'll Be About All.
The Absentee.
The Alternative.
Theatrical Socialism.
The Beginner.
The Best.
The Bright Side.
The Brute!
The Call of the Present.
The Catch Phrase.
The Cause.
The Collector.
The Cordial Movie Man.
The Criterion.
The Crossing.
The Dears.
The Difference.
The Dissenter.
The Doctor's Art.
The Doctor's Desire.
The Dollar.
The Effect.
The Egoistical Actor.
The Expert.
The Explanation.
The Fair Sex.
The Fall.
The First One.
The Formula.
The Game.
The Gunshot.
The Increase.
Their Calendar.
Their Favorite Enemy.
Their Final Disposition.
Their Ideas of Purity.
The Intruder.
The Irish of It.
Their Point of View.
The Joker.
The Last Word.
The Late Returning.
The Lecturer.
The Limit—Plus.
The Materialist Viewpoint.
The Missing Cog.
The Modern Child.
The Modern Prodigal.
The Modern Way.
The Motorman.
The Muses.
The Next Thing.
The Old Oaken Bucket.
The Only Ones.
The Only Way.
The Perfect Man.
The Picture.
The Point of View.
The Polite Spirit.
The Price.
The Pursuit of Culture.

13



One you look at a picture

Picture No. 13

three WRITE the title in the Reply Book

1. Sailing
2. ....
3. ....

Picture No. 14

1. ....
2. ....
3. ....

Picture No. 15

1. ....
2. ....
3. ....

Picture No. 16

1. ....
2. ....
3. ....

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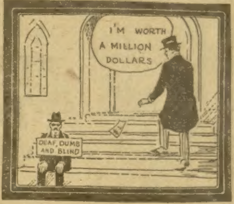
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Why wade thru a mixed-up list of titles, when you can get the complete list of titles, alphabetically arranged?

Dauntless
Handicapped
Not So Bad
A Celtic Cut
Deferred
One Opinion
Rebellion
His Part
Baby Ways
Same Walk
Its Identity
Warning
Uncanny
Diplomatic
Lived Down
His Wish
System
True to Life
In England

Well Provided For
Her Preference
Bohemian Rates
Pittsburg Mythology
His Suggestion
Give and Take
The Shining Shore
Sailor on the Boat
Military Metaphor
Literal Truth
The Real Truth
At Old Nassau
Far as He Got
He Suspected Papa
Home and Abroad
A Wasted Quote
Poetry vs. Prose
Capital Offense
Happy Man

Reduced to Extremities
Inefficient Management
Could Find His Way
Yoke While You Wait
Eve's Bridal Shower
A Time for Everything
He Has a Chance To
Science of Deduction
Maidenly Modesty
Concerning Canned Speeches
Been a Boy Himself
Subject to Withdrawal
The Sheep and the Goats
In Good Taste
Permanently Injured
It Takes Two to Make a Quarrel

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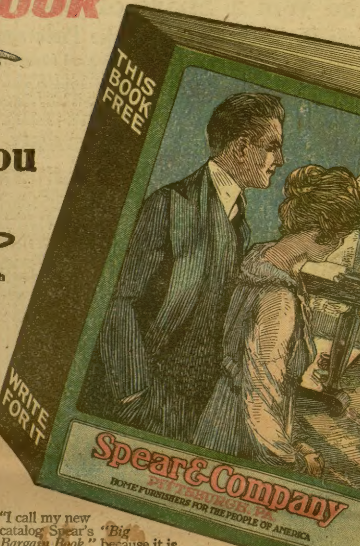

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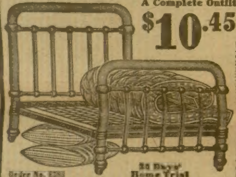

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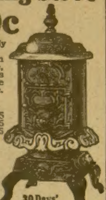

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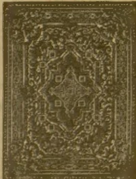

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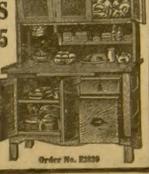

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